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THE WILD KNIGHT:
OR,
THE UNKNOWN CRUSADER.

A TALE OF GERMANY IN THE DAYS OF THE EMPIRE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE UNDER A CLOUD.

The road of our travellers lay through one of the wildest and most romantic sections of Germany. Just upon the edge of the Black Forest, among mountains, and rocks, and woods, and ravines ; with ever and anon deep chasms yawning at their feet, and the mountain streams dashing along in mad torrents below them. The scene inspired the hero of the Eagle, and in eloquent language he pictured his emotions. Agnes soon gave him her undivided attention, and ere long she joined him in conversation. Engelbert, with a perception that did credit both to his heart and head, rode by the side of his esquire, and thus the lovers were left alone without having at first perceived it. They were lovers, even in that short time, and they both knew it, and it was this thought that ever and anon brought a cloud upon Agnes's brow. As she gazed upon the man by her side, and thought how brave, how generous, how noble, how good, and how handsome he was, she felt her heart grow warm, and her love went forth prayerfully and true. But then would come the memory of Rudolf of Baden—the will of her dying father, and the chilling sensation came upon her. Yet she betrayed not her fears to her companion, for he gave her little time to cherish them. From the subject of the country and the scenery about them, the Knight went to the story of the trials and triumphs of the Christians in Palestine.

Thus passed several hours, and at the end of that time, as a short silence ensued, the Crusader gazed upon his fair companion with an earnest, prayerful look. She looked up and met his gaze, and a warm glow suffused her face. She knew not that he was looking upon her, or she would not have gazed up then, for her eyes were beaming with the tale of love, and she knew it. And a less interested person than herself, and one with less perception, could not have failed to see that the Knight's gaze was one of pure, devoted affection.

It was a moment of strange emotions. Each had detected the other in the act of pouring out the silent language of love. The Knight was the first to speak.

"Gentle lady," he said, in a tone made rich and musical by the deep feeling that sustained it, "why should two honorable people, whom fate has thrown together, hide the deepest, holiest emotions of their souls? I will not hide mine. You shall not say I could look what I dared not speak. Agnes of Luxemburg, I love thee with the whole strength of my heart, and with the undivided power of my heart's first love. Thou art the first maiden who ever awoke the sweet whisper in my soul, and to thee I give my poor heart with all its hopes, its aspirations, and its joys. I trust I have not offended."

For some moments the fair girl gazed down upon the arching neck of her steed without speaking. She trembled violently, for there was a mighty struggle in her soul.

"Alas!" she at length uttered, raising her moistened eyes to her companion's face, "would that my love and my duty were united!"

"How, lady? Speak plainly, I beseech thee."

"Knowest thou not that my father willed that I should wed with the Count of Baden?"

"I knew he had so *wished*. Did he lay the command upon thee?"

"He never commanded me, sir. His wish was always my law. When he expressed to me his desire he knew that if it were in my power to do it, his desire would be accomplished."

"But thy love, lady?"

"Thou art the first man who ever won my young heart. See—I am frank because thou hast been."

"Bless thee, gentle Agnes—bless thee forever. Thou dost love me, then?"

"With all my heart."

"Then see: We still have ground for hope. If the Lord of Baden be an honorable man, he will not surely hold thee to a union from which love must ever be absent. He would not have such a wife if he could."

"Ah—you know him not!" said Agnes, with a slight shake of the head. "Nor do you know the man whom my father placed over me as my guardian. Alas! they have no hearts of love or sympathy."

The Knight gazed upon his companion as she spoke, and when she ceased speaking he bowed his head. There was a cloud upon his brow, and his lips were compressed ; yet he seemed more worked upon by some firm purpose of his own, than by any fears of the powers of others. When he again raised his head his bright eye beamed with more than ordinary meaning.

"Gentle Agnes," he said, "love me—love me well—love me as I love thee—and leave the rest to me. In this universe of good there must be power enough to overcome all evil, if it could only be properly applied ; and so why may we not hope that right and justice shall triumph here?"

"My love I cannot control," the maiden answered. "Were I never to see thee again, from this hour my heart could never give up thine image—my soul could never forget this, its first holy love. As true as I live, I speak frankly and truthfully now. Were the painful clause removed ; could the barrier be broken down—honorably so—I would place my hand within thine own, and be thine forever!"

A. BOBBETT SC.

THE BATTLE FOR AGNES OF LUXEMBURG.

The noble Knight raised his hand to his cheek and brushed away a tear, and when he spoke his voice was low and sweet.

"Among the blessings of God, and standing second only to the pure faith of the tried Christian, is bright, sunny hope. Let us cling to it."

As these words were spoken Sir Engelbert rode up and asked if 'twas not time for dinner.

"I am hungry," he said, "for I am of the decided opinion that our generous meal of the morning sharpened my appetite. See: Here is a lovely spot. The grass is green and plenty—yonder stream must be fresh and pure—and this huge cliff will keep off that chill from the towering snow of the peaks of Durmenwold."

Agnes signified her assent to the proposition, and the party stopped and dismounted. The bits were removed from the mouths of the horses, and while they fell to cropping the new, sweet grass, Robert and Bernard set out the food which the thoughtful butler of the convent had provided. During the meal the conversation turned upon the robber knights of Swabia, and Agnes gave her companions much information concerning them.

"They are of various grades and castes," she said, after she had related several of their more daring exploits. "Some waylay travellers and rob them,—some rob common dwellings—while some even go so far and so low as to strip the poor peasant of his all."

"But they are not knights," said the Black Eagle, earnestly.

"Yes, sir. Some of them are knights who have returned from the Crusades—most of them are such—and finding themselves without land or money, they must labor, as they have been laboring, with their arms. There are no wars going on in which they can engage, and so they make war upon every one they meet. And then there are a few who still hold their knightly honor as of much worth. My guardian is such an one. Nothing less than a wealthy monastery can tempt him, and seldom that. He makes war mostly upon cities and wealthy towns. Sometimes he goes from his castle with from four to six hundred knights and men-at-arms in his train ; and when he means to attack a powerful city he will engage all the robber knights about him. But I think their race will soon be run. An imperial courier stopped not long since at the convent, and he told us that the Emperor was already taking measures to sweep them off."

"But, if I mistake not, the Emperor himself used to belong to their troupe before he received the crown," remarked Engelbert.

"Certainly he did," returned Agnes. "And now he means to sacrifice his old friends to win favor with the cities and the peasantry ; for, to speak truly, Rudolf of Hapsburg is not very popular."

"And Rudolf of Baden," said the Unknown, in a low tone, that could not reach the ears of the esquires,—"what is he?"

"Below the wild Count Everhard, for he will even rob a church!"

"Impossible!" cried our hero, starting with astonishment. "Baden—rob a church? A German Count sink to that?"

"'Tis even so."

The Black Knight arose from the stone whereon he had been sitting, and walked away by himself ; but ere long he came back, and the warm, bright smile was upon his face once more.

As soon as the horses had rested sufficiently, which fact they were foolish enough to manifest by capering about, the bits were set, and the party again mounted and started on. Half the afternoon had passed away, and the travellers had just entered upon a broad table of level land, when Engelbert's horse, which was ahead, suddenly stopped and placed his nose to the ground ; and in a moment more he raised his head and gave a wild, startling snort.

"Ah—that means that we are to meet somebody," said the Black Knight, as Agnes gazed inquiringly towards him.

For a moment an expression of fear dwelt upon the maiden's face ; but it quickly passed away.

"We have nothing to fear, surely," the Knight resumed. "If they be robbers we have nothing to lose, and if they be not robbers they must be friends. Yet I'll don my casque and take my shield, for war sometimes comes when we least expect it."

As he thus spoke he exchanged his velvet cap for the black steel helm with its triple plume, and then calling to his esquire, he took his shield. Just as Engelbert had made the same arrangement a party of three knights appeared upon the opposite side of the plain, which was nearly half a mile distant. As the distance became less, an exclamation of fear dropped from Agnes's lips, and when her companion looked upon her, he found her pale and trembling.

"What is it?" he asked, eagerly.

"*The Count of Baden!*" she uttered.

"The Count? Which one?"

"He that rides upon the right hand—the shortest one."

"And do you know who are those other two?"

Agnes looked a few moments, and then she replied,—

"Aye—they are two of the most villainous knights that ever broke knightly vows. There is Sir Frederick von Bondorf, who came from Bavaria to save his head from the law ; and Sir Marco Montani, a crafty, bloody, and unscrupulous Italian. They are the Count's tools, and do his bidding for hire."

"They look like stout knights," said the Eagle. half to himself.

"And so they are," responded Agnes.

"But you tremble, dearest."

"Aye—the Count may be on his way to Saint Fulvia."

"Ha! For thee! Now I see. And why should he have come? Think you Everhard sent him?"

The maiden pondered a few moments ere she replied, and during her hesitation the Knight stopped.

"I'll tell thee all in a few words," she at length said, "and thus save thy questions. My guardian will do much for the Count of Baden. He would not for worlds directly do a deed to harm me ; yet he looks upon my marriage with the Count as a fixed fact, and he will help it on. Thrice have I refused to go to Baden's stout castle of Heidelberg, and Rudolf has sworn that he would take me to his dwelling by force, if I would not go otherwise. The last time I saw my guardian he told me, in a laughing mood—he laughed because he thinks my coyness of the Count is only the result of whim ; he does not know that I despise him—he told me to beware of Rudolf of Baden, for that he meant to kidnap me on the first opportunity. So I think he has come now for that purpose."

"But what can be his object? Tell me all, and then I shall know how to act."

"Why—he can see that I like him not, and it makes him angry. He will not lose my broad lands and noble castles if he can help it. He thinks if he can once get me into his hands, he can worry me into the marriage."

"You think so?"

"I know it, for he told one so who communicated the fact to my cousin."

"Then you wish not to go with him, even if he wants you?"

"Oh, sir.—No—ah—yes—yes! You must not peril your life. I know those knights, and they are very powerful."

"You have not answered my question, lady. Would you rather I should conduct you to your guardian, or give you up to these men if they demand you?——Ah—stop—I want the simple wish of your heart."

"Why—surely I would rather go on with you, for I fear that bad man ; but then——"

"But then," interrupted the Black Knight, with a smile, "to our good abbess of Saint Fulvia I pledged my life that I would conduct thee safely to thy guardian. Perhaps you heard it?"

"Yes."

"Then say no more. And as for risk, be assured I am proof against the arms of all villain knights."

The new comers were now within a few rods, and as the Count of Baden recognized Agnes, he put spurs to his horse. As he did so the Unknown dropped his vizor and secretly loosened the strapping of his heavy battle-axe. He of Baden was in full armor, only he wore his vizor up.

"Ha—my little truant!" the Count cried, as he drew up a few yards off. "I have found thee most opportunely. I was after thee, sweet one."

With a powerful effort Agnes overcame the tumultuous emotions that shook her frame, and then in a respectful manner she replied,—

"I am on my way to Stuttgart. I am going to the castle of my guardian."

"So you meant when you started. I saw the noble Count, thy guardian, this morning, and he bade me come and take thee. And so you see I have come. Sir Knight, I will relieve thee of thy charge."

"Were I anxious to give up my charge I might thank thee for thy kindness," returned our hero, calmly and modestly. "But as I assumed the charge for a specified purpose, I must do my pledge. Still, you will allow me to thank you all the same."

The young Count was at first puzzled by this. He was young for the place of power he occupied, being not yet thirty ; but he had had much experience, and was accounted one of the best and surest lances in Baden.

Before he could answer, however, their attention was called in another direction, where two more knights had appeared upon the field. Agnes of Luxemburg drew a long, painful breath, and her cheek once more blanched with fear, for in the two horsemen who had thus made their appearance she recognized Sir Otto of Metzinger and John of Mainhardt! She knew that their souls were full of revenge against her noble lover ; and is it a wonder that she trembled with the thought of her two faithful friends meeting these five full-armed knights? Her heart sank within her as the conviction came that she must now go with the hated Count von Baden!

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLE.

"Look ye, Sir Knight—for thy garb betrays thee such—let me know with whom I am speaking, and then we may the sooner come to an understanding."

"Thou art speaking with an honorable gentleman—with a knight who never broke his vows, and who holds his given word more sacred than life. Further than that I cannot inform thee—unless, indeed, it be to simply state that I have pledged my word and life to deliver Agnes von Luxemburg to her guardian at his own castle."

Again the count pondered ere he spoke in reply. At the instant he was upon the point of a hot rejoinder, but he allowed it to pass unspoken, for there was something in the tone and bearing of the stranger that moved him strangely. At length, however, he turned to Agnes, and with some sternness in his manner, he said,

"Lady, I have come for thee, and I trust that you will at once place yourself under my care."

The maiden gazed upon the count uneasily. Never before had he appeared to such disadvantage as now. His short, stumpy form ; his hair of deep, fiery red ; his face of hard, sensual, and almost fiendish expression ; and his known character of cruelty and avarice, were now in direct contrast with the tone, the bearing, and the character of her new-found friend. With a tremulous emotion she answered—

"I have no right, sir, to leave the care of one who has pledged so much for my safety. My good aunt has placed me where I am, and I can only be released by the free act of this noble knight."

"Ah—you've seen his face, have you not?" asked the count.

"I have."

"And it is fair to look upon, I'll warrant!" he continued, with a bitter curling of his thick nether lip. "But," he added, turning to the Unknown, "let us have no more words. I demand of you this lady ; and let me inform you that I have the right so to do."

"I make no question," returned our hero, calmly but emphatically. "Thou art not the Castle of Stuttgart, and, consequently, I cannot deliver this lady into your hands. If you wish to gain her into your power you must follow me to the dwelling of Everhard von Wurtemberg, and there you may find her."

"Now, by Saint Paul, thou hast crossed the bound of life!" cried the count, lowering his vizor as he spoke, and drawing in his rein: "Give up the girl, or roll you in the dust!"

"Set thy lance at rest, good sir, and ride away," said the Black Knight, proudly. "Thou art no match for me."

"Ha! sayest thou so? By the Holy Apostles, thou shalt prove it! Know that it is Rudolf of Baden whom thou hast met!"

"And thou hast met the **BLACK EAGLE OF PALESTINE**!" returned the other, quickly.

Rudolf of Baden started at the sound of this name, and his lance was seen to tremble in his hand. But he soon recovered himself, and then, in a tone of unmistakable bravado, he cried—

"By my halidom, Sir Knight of the Eagle, thou art the very man I would have met. Thou shalt yield to Rudolf of Baden!"

"As you will," calmly replied our hero.

With an oath the count turned his horse and dashed off some distance.

"Fear not, Agnes," said the noble knight, as he saw that she trembled. "I shall not harm that man, and you may rest assured that he cannot harm me."

"What ho, there!" cried the count, who had turned and couched his lance. "Now look to thyself!"

The Black Knight immediately placed himself on the defensive, but he made no movement forward.

"Wilt thou start on?" asked Rudolf of Baden.

"Mind not my movements, sir. Come you as you please."

"Then here's for Baden and the Lady Agnes of Luxemburg!" shouted Rudolf, as he put spurs to his beast and dashed on.

The Crusader's horse knew as well what he was to do as did his master ; and, moreover, he did surely betray both pride and courage. At the proper moment the noble animal leaped quickly to the left hand—the lance of the count was turned easily away, while his opponent's weapon caught him by the brassart of the right arm, fairly bearing him clean over the haunches of his horse, and landing him with a heavy shock upon the pebbly sand.

It was some moments ere Rudolf arose ; but he got upon his feet at length, and as he threw up his vizor for fresh air, his face was seen to be very pale, and wrought upon by deep, dark passion.

"Ha!" he cried, as Sir Otto von Metzinger and his companion rode up, "you are just in time. Do you know yon braggart knight?"

"Aye—i' faith I do. I had a tilt with him this very morning. He snatched a golden prize from my grasp, too."

"And you like revenge?"

"Aye—I do."

"Then join me now.——What ho—Bondorf! Montani! where are ye?"

The two knights answered to the call, and as they appeared the count mounted his horse again, and drew his sword.

"Now, Sir Braggart!" he cried, in an insulting tone, addressing the Black Knight: "Will ye give me up the damsel?"

"Of course I shall not."

"Then the consequences be upon thine own head! I have made known my claim, and you have shown it no regard ; I have made my demand, and you have refused. Now I must enforce my claim. These brave gentlemen are under my orders ; and to make the work short they will help me. Yet thou shalt have one more opportunity. Wilt thou relinquish the lady Agnes to me?"

"Oh!" gasped the maiden, urging her way to her protector's side—"not for me! Oh! not for me! They will surely kill you, for they now seek revenge!"

"Hush, lady. Believe me—we are a host of power against which they cannot prevail.——Engelbert," he added, turning to his brave companion, "what say you?"

"This!" was the reply. And as he spoke he drew his battle-axe.

"Good!" returned the Black Eagle, at the same time drawing his own ponderous axe. It was a fearful weapon in the hands of him who now wielded it. Its keen, subtle edge could find its way unturned through the toughest helm, and the man who sank beneath its full power never rose again.

The two crusaders left their esquires with Agnes, and then rode forward. Sir Otto had left his men-at-arms to pursue some other course—probably that they might rob some farm-house. So there were five armed knights against them.

"Sir Knights," spoke he of the Eagle, in a loud, commanding tone, "I ask ye for free passage to Stuttgart. I am on an errand of peace, for I have had war enough. Yet woe be unto that man who shall dare oppose me! Will ye move aside and let me pass?"

"Will ye give up the Lady of Luxemburg?"

"Not to you!"

"Then take the reward of thy temerity! Ho! my brave fellows—at them!"

Like unto stout oaks of the forest sat the crusaders in their saddles. The Count of Baden was witty, for though he had dashed on in advance, yet ere he reached the enemy, he caused his horse to leap aside; and the consequence was that Bondorf went by him, and met the Black Knight first. The latter received the blow of Sir Frederick's sword upon his shield, and then, with one blow of his ponderous axe, he cracked the helm of his adversary down upon his crown, and sent him rolling in the sand. Ere yet he could fairly recover his axe, the sword of Rudolf was above his head; but his shield was in readiness for the stroke, and for some moments he only parried the count's furious onset.

Sir Otto was rolling in the sand from a blow of Engelbert's axe, and as the Black Knight caught a heavy stroke from Rudolf's sword upon the edge of his buckler, he had the satisfaction of seeing his companion strike the Knight of Mainhardt from his saddle.

"Rudolf of Baden," he said, as soon as he saw this, "I wish not to harm thee. For this fair lady's sake I would spare thee."

"Ho! thou art kind when thy craven heart fails thee! For the lady's sake, thou unknown Circe, I'll strike thee to the——"

Thus far the count had spoken, under the impression that his adversary's backwardness was the result of inability; but he quickly found his mistake, for, ere he could finish the slanderous sentence, the Black Knight brought him a blow upon the side of the head with the flat of his axe that knocked him from his saddle in an instant.

"How with you, sir?" our hero cried, turning to Montani, who sat calmly in his saddle, a short distance off.

The crafty Italian was a brave man enough, and one who would not have fled from danger; but, on the other hand, his blood was cool in other men's quarrels, and he was not fond of seeking danger. He had seen enough of the crusaders to assure him that he was no match for either of them. He had watched the affray narrowly, and had seen, from the first, that the Knight of the Eagle was only toying with the count; and he saw, too, that the life of the latter had been purposely spared.

"This is no quarrel of mine, brave sir," he obsequiously replied, with the strong idiom of his country. "I might have helped my friend had I seen his life was in danger; but I saw that you meant not to slay him, and I left him to himself."

"You were right, sir," rejoined our hero: "I would not willingly have slain one who may yet be the only protector of the lady I now have in honorable charge; and if the count has received a heavier blow than I intended he must lay it to his insulting tongue."

As soon as the Black Knight found that the Italian would not contend, he leaped from his saddle, and went to look at the wounded, and Engelbert soon joined him in the work. They found Sir John von Mainhardt dead, and also Frederick von Bondorf. Those two were past praying for. But Sir Otto still lived, having only been stunned, while the Count of Baden already showed signs of life.

"Here, Sir Knight," said our hero, addressing the Italian, "you can easily bring these two men back to their senses; and we must leave them with you, for the day is on the decline, and we must be on our way."

Montani said he would attend to them, and thereupon the crusaders once more started on their journey.

The Black Knight and Agnes rode side by side for some time without speaking. Upon the fair face of the maiden there was a deep shade of fear, and at length she gave utterance to her thoughts:

"Noble sir," she said, tremulously, "I fear you have taken upon yourself a fearful load in my behalf."

"How so?" the knight asked, lightly.

"You have made an enemy of the powerful count, and through his influence you may find many more. Oh! had you slain that Italian instead of one of the others it would have been better."

"Ah—why is that?"

"Montani is a villain of the deepest dye; and at the beck of his master he would not hesitate to murder you?"

"His master?"

"The count is his master. Alas! I fear you have made trouble for yourself."

"But I have made no trouble for you, lady?"

"Oh, no. You have saved me from a very disagreeable position."

"Then you should give me joy. Enemies? Why—bless you, lady, for the last fifteen years I have not breathed save with enemies on all hands."

"Ah—but they were open, known enemies. These will be as serpents. Their venom will be hidden under a smiling mask, and their fangs made to guard a flattering tongue."

"I thank thee for reminding me of it," said the knight, with a kind smile, "for now I shall be on my guard. And you must hereafter please me by not holding such fears, for I assure thee I am safe. I would not make an enemy of the Wild Knight of Wurtemberg if I can help it, but I fear not Rudolf of Baden."

The crusader's words were so easily and frankly spoken, and his manner was so calm and assured, that Agnes soon forgot her fears, and ere long the conversation flowed joyously and freely.

Had the Unknown been aware of the deep, dark villainy of which his newly made enemies were capable, he might not have felt so perfectly assured. Or, at all events, he would have planned for a more careful watch than he now deemed necessary. In his soul of honor he could not yet conceive of such meanness as characterized some of the knights of Germany. He did not fully realize the foul rule that dwelt upon the imperial throne. Had he known that those who sat in the highest places of the empire—those who held the reins of government and administered the affairs of the great nation—were only tricksters and villains, he might not have wondered that the spirit had crept out into the towns and castles. And perhaps 'twas well that he did not know it, for he was comparatively happy now, as he surely could not have been with this dark knowledge upon his soul.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WILD KNIGHT AND HIS CASTLE.

One of the stoutest castles in the empire was that of Count Everhard of Wurtemberg. Though said to be in Stuttgart, yet it was some miles from the city, and in a course a little north of west. It was upon a spur of the mountains of the Black Forest, and so situated that a mere handful of stout men could have defended it against an army. It was built upon a huge rock, three sides of which were nearly perpendicular, and the whole of the top of the precipice was occupied by the structure. The court was of an irregular form, with two right angles and one obtuse and one acute. The walls were very thick—thick enough for two horsemen to ride thereon abreast, and enclosed a space of some three hundred square rods. Upon each of the angles was a high tower, besides two smaller towers at the gate. The main building, or the lord's residence, was at the northwestern corner, on the shortest side of the quadrangle, and was surmounted by the highest tower of the castle. Opposite this, and occupying the obtuse angle, was the servant's building, which was connected with the former by an arched passage. Opposite the lord's house, on the other hand, and occupying the right angle of the two longest sides, was the dwelling of the men-at-arms and such retainers as might at any time be within the castle—there being accommodations for five hundred men. Then, on the other side—on the longest side—were the stables, within which there were seldom less than from three to four hundred horses. Many a princely stable had been robbed that the Count of Wurtemberg might have horses to suit him. Between the stables and the barracks was the gate; and here was a work of nature that transcended all works of art for such a purpose. The gate stood upon the edge of a perpendicular precipice, or wall of rock, while directly opposite, and distant some twenty feet, was the brow of another precipice, leaving between them a deep, yawning chasm, through which poured, with a continuous roar, a mountain torrent, that emptied itself into the Nesenbach, some ten or fifteen miles distant. In order to reach the vale from the castle, this opposite cliff must be reached, as from thence there was a winding way of descent, which seemed to have been carved out from the solid rock on purpose for a road for men and horses. The drawbridge was a massive piece of work—the timbers being thoroughly braced and bolted together, and stout bulwarks, or parapets, upon the sides, of frame-work, served to strengthen the whole. This was so contrived that a single horse could raise it easily; and when once raised, the gaining of the castle by any being without wings was next to an impossibility. This bridge, when lowered, rested one end upon the opposite precipice, and it was wide enough for six horsemen to ride out or in abreast.

The only place where an army of besiegers could have thought of making an attempt to gain the castle would have been upon the eastern side, where the stables were, as this was the only side of the rock which was not nearly perpendicular. But even here the feat would have been a dubious one, as ladders would be required, and as there were several places where only one man could advance at the same time. And then, upon the top of the wall here, and upon the roof of the stables, were always kept large quantities of huge stones, which even the women could have rolled off upon the devoted heads of those below.

In the common sitting-room of the castle sat three persons. It was not really cold, but yet the air was damp and chill upon the top of the high precipice, and a huge fire was blazing away in the wide capacious fire-place. Near to this fire sat two girls. The eldest had seen twenty years of life, and each year, as it had passed over her head, must have placed some touch of finish upon her beauty. Her form was light and graceful, airy as the fabled houri, and possessing just those points of beauty that an ardent imagination would give to a fairy. Unlike most of her countrywomen, she had dark-brown hair, and hazel eyes; but when the rays of the sun lay upon her head, the glossy tresses took a golden hue, showing that the extreme fineness and gloss of the hair made it look darker than it really was. Such was CONSTANCE OF BADEN, the only sister of the Count Rudolf. Her features plainly showed that smiles and good-nature were the legitimate tenants there; but at the present time there was a cloud upon her brow, and a cast of melancholy overshadowed her beautiful countenance.

Close by Constance, and so near that one arm rested upon her shoulder, sat the bright and envied BLANCHE OF WURTEMBERG. She was just eighteen years of age, smaller even than Constance, and more light and airy in appearance. Her sunny hair hung in long ringlets over her shoulders, and her large, sparkling eyes were of a deep, dark blue. When she smiled the whole face was bright, and the joyous emotion seemed to bring her very soul up to view. She loved to smile, for her whole nature was one of joyousness and satisfaction, and everything like ill-feeling she drove from her as soon as possible. She was the daughter of the Wild Knight, and was as the "apple of his eye," or the "one pearl of great price," for which he was ready to sacrifice everything on earth save his own will. Ah! even for that beloved child he would not have turned from a path once resolved upon. He loved her because she was worthy of being loved, and also because she bore the form and feature of the woman who gave her birth—the woman whom Everhard loved with his whole soul—the first and only thing he had ever loved save the two girls now before him, since he had reached the estate of manhood.

The third person in the room was EVERHARD VON WURTEMBERG, *The Wild Knight*. This sobriquet he had long borne, and no man ever bore it more deservedly. Upon his shield was this legend: "*The friend of God—the foe of all mankind!*"—and it gave a fair story of his character. It contained the sum and substance of his aims of life, his hopes, and his aspirations. With a deep reverence for what he supposed God to be, and a most stern adherence to absolute Truth, he combined an utter disregard of human life, of human weal or woe, of the authority of emperors and kings, and of everything that could possibly come in contact with his plans. In years he was not over five-and-forty; tall and powerfully built; with hair of a flaxen hue, that curled closely about his head; eyes of a light blue; and a face of strange, majestic comeliness. His character was imaged forth in his features. That massive brow, surmounting a head very heavy at the base, showing the animal passions strongly developed, but yet with such massiveness of the intellectual organs that the animal was in a great measure under rigid control. And then those restless eyes—that nose so prominent, with its nostrils quickly distending under excitement, and the lips compressed and bloodless when the soul was moved.

The Count was habited in a hunting suit of green velvet bordered with gold, which dress was admirably adapted to show off his noble form. His arms were folded across his breast, and he was pacing to and fro across the apartment. At length he stopped and looked towards the two girls.

"My young lady of Baden," he said, with some show of irony in his tone, though none appeared in his face, "you must pardon me for informing you that you were very foolish."

"Oh, noble sir," the maiden quickly replied, "I have known that a long while. My brother has told me a great many times that I was foolish."

"And didn't you tell him that he was a fool?" asked Blanche, casting a sidelong glance at her father as she spoke.

"Why should she tell him that, my pet?" the Count asked.

"Because he showed it when he said she was foolish."

"O—I take the shaft," cried Everhard, with a laugh. "I knew you aimed it at me. But," he added, turning again towards Constance of Baden, "what a precious little simpleton you must be, to be sure, to suppose that the fellow holds any remembrance of you. Here he has been gone these nine years,——left you only——"

"Only eight years, sir," interrupted Constance, —eight years this very month."

"You keep an account of time most accurately. Upon my soul I must have you to keep my accounts. But let it be eight years—eight years this very month—and even at that you were but twelve years of age when he went away, and he must have been two or three-and-twenty at least."

"Just twenty, sir."

"Ah—you know, of course."

"I do, sir."

"Very well. And now only think of it: Because he used to laugh and play with you; because you happened to be children together under the same tutor; and because in the fun and frolic of boyhood he promised to take you for a wife—to suppose for even a moment that he remembers it now! Why he's fallen in love with a score of Orient beauties ere this."

"Stop, Sir Count. You have no right to malign thus one whom you do not know."

"Pooh! It's the nature of man."

"Then all I have to say is, that Engelbert von Marburg is not like other men."

"Perhaps he isn't. In all probability he was dead long ago. These crusades are not very conducive to longevity."

"I do not believe he is——"

"There, Constance—that will do. You are going to be my wife; and a very pretty, faithful, loving wife you'll be, too—— Ha! was not that the horn at the lower fast?"

"It was, father," answered Blanche, "for I heard it very plainly."

"Surely Rudolf cannot have returned so soon. He cannot much more than have reached Saint Fulvia by this time. Ah—it may be your lover, Blanche—our good Knight of Metzinger."

The girl thus addressed half started from her seat, her hands clasped, and her lips compressed.

"Say not so, my father," she imploringly uttered.

"Nonsense, child. I tell you Sir Otto von Metzinger is the richest man in the whole empire."

But ere the maiden could reply the blast from the lower gate came up louder than before, and ere long the messenger of the guard entered the apartment.

"Who's at the gate?" demanded Everhard.

"Two knights with their esquires, and the lady Agnes," answered the messenger.

"Admit them, and conduct them hither.—— But hold. Is't Sir Rudolf?"

"No, my lord. We know them not; and seeing that they held the lady Agnes in charge we did not question them."

"Very well. Admit them."

"Now, by St. John, whom have we here?" the Wild Knight muttered to himself, after the messenger had gone.

But the girls could not guess, so the matter rested until the attendant returned. When the door was opened Agnes entered first, followed by the two crusaders.

"My good guardian," she said, addressing Everhard, "these are two knights who have kindly conducted me hither from the convent. This is Sir Engelbert von Marburg, whom you surely remember; and this is, *The Knight of the Black Eagle!*"

At the sound of Engelbert's name both Constance of Baden and the stout host were strangely moved; but when the well-known cognomen of the latter knight fell upon their ears, Everhard seemed to forget the former. He started, and having gazed the Unknown in the face for some moments, he quickly advanced and extended his hand.

"Brave sir," he said, frankly, "you are welcome to Wurtemberg. Your knightly deeds have been borne on the wings of fame before you, so you come not as a stranger."

"I thank you, Sir Everhard," the Black Knight returned. And then, with a smile, he added—"And you will permit me to say, that if I am known by my deeds in Germany—you are not unknown in Palestine."

"No—I suppose not. But here are the ladies. Sir Knight of the Eagle, this is my daughter, Blanche."

"Ah, lady," the comely knight uttered, as he took her hand, "there are few German knights in Palestine who have not heard of the beauty and virtues of Blanche of Wurtemberg."

"Ah, Sir Flatterer, you can use your tongue," said Blanche, with a grateful blush upon her face.

"Aye, lady—when I have truth to speak."

"And this is our fair cousin, Constance of Baden," resumed Everhard, approaching the second maiden.

"Fair lady," spoke the Unknown, in a low, constrained tone, "the best blessings of Heaven be with you."

Constance gazed up into the Knight's face at the sound of his voice, and there was a strange fluttering in her heart as she spoke:

"Welcome to Germany, noble sir." She seemed desirous to say more, but her words failed her; and she was greatly relieved when Sir Engelbert was presented.

"I think you remember this lady," the Wild Knight said, as he introduced the second Crusader.

"Most surely I do," replied Engelbert, as he gazed into the face of Constance. "And do you not remember me?" he asked, with a happy smile.

"Yes, sir—well." She trembled as she spoke; and the Knight of Marburg might have been less composed had he known the conversation that had been held just before his coming. But as it was he betrayed more than he thought. The deep glow upon his cheek as he met the mild gaze of the beautiful girl, and the warm light of his eyes as she smiled upon him, told very plainly that he experienced more and deeper emotion than he did when he held Blanche of Wurtemberg by the hand.

For some moments the Count Everhard seemed not quite at ease, but the feeling was soon overcome, and then the conversation flowed freely. The girls were sent to see that supper was prepared, and in the meantime the three knights entered into a free and easy conversation.

"Sir Knight," said the host, addressing the Eagle, "I am aware that in Palestine you were only known under the peculiar titles which your position gave you. But now that you have returned to your native land may we not know who it is that has shed such lustre upon our arms?"

"You will pardon me, Sir Everhard, but I cannot at present reveal my true name or position. Yet believe me, sir, it is not from any fear of being known that I thus adhere to a resolution taken years ago. Only permit me to say, if you honor me now, you shall honor me no less when you know me as I am; and I trust it may not be long ere I throw off the mystic veil that I have worn for so many years."

"I believe you, sir," the Wild Knight replied; "and surely I would not seek to penetrate any secret which a brave man wished to keep."

After this the conversation turned upon affairs in the Holy Land, and the crusaders entertained their host well with their stories of valorous deeds done by Knights of the Cross. At length the supper was announced, and the party withdrew to the dining-hall where the table was spread.

As the three girls sat together it would have been difficult to decide which was the most beautiful. The question had been often raised, but never fully settled, though Agnes of Wurtemberg generally received the greatest favor. Her style of beauty was the most solid and loveable. Her fulness of form and majesty of bearing were calculated to inspire respect and reverence, while her perfect beauty of feature and goodness of heart could not but inspire love and affection. Constance and Blanche were both smaller—more fairy-like—less like real things of life—and though they possessed all Agnes's purity and goodness, they lacked her courage and nerve.

The evening wore away, and at a late hour the guests were shown to their room.

"Engelbert," said the Unknown, as soon as they were left alone. "You have known Constance of Baden before."

"I have, my brother," returned Marburg, warmly, and with a peculiar glow upon his face. "We were almost brought up together. She was my playmate, and I always found much joy in her company, notwithstanding she was but a child in years while I was almost a man."

"I knew you must have been intimate, for I marked her face as she met you, and if there was not a tell-tale flood there then I cannot read."

"Ah—think you the lady loves me?"

"Has she any reason so to do? In years past have you ever spoken with her on the subject?"

"Yes—when I left her she promised me that she would be my wife. Of course I could not think of holding her by such a promise, but yet her words have never been absent from my mind. Through all the long years of my sojourn in a distant clime I have prayed to God that I might return and find Constance von Baden free to bestow her hand upon me. Oh! isn't she beautiful?"

"She is, Engelbert. And now let me advise you. While you watched the fair girl with love, I watched her with the eye of curiosity; and I saw enough to assure me that she was not happy. I noticed that whenever her eye rested upon Everhard, even though it were but for an instant, a perceptible shudder crept through her frame."

"How?——"

"Wait a moment: And I noticed that while Everhard regarded her with a strange fondness, his lip would suddenly compress, and his hand spasmodically close as his gaze rested upon yourself."

"And what of this?" asked Engelbert, eagerly.

"Why—I made up my mind that the Wild Count Wurtemberg was jealous of you."

"*Jealous of me!*" uttered Marburg, starting.

"Aye—so I should judge."

"But you do not think the Count—the father of Blanche—would make Constance his wife."

"Why not? You know Agnes of Luxemburg is his ward; and that he will enforce upon her that provision of her father's will which touches her marriage with the Count of Baden. So may not Rudolf mean to give his sister's hand as a sort of *quid pro quo?*"

"By the powers of Christendom, it may be so."

"I am sure it is so; and now let me advise with you. See Constance as soon as you can. Find out her feelings towards you—confess all—and then come to me. Ask me no more questions, but do as I bid you."

CHAPTER VII.

GATHERING FOR A STORM

Upon the highest tower of the castle there was a peculiar contrivance for determining the hour of the night by the stars; and when the watchman there struck the hour of midnight, the stout Knight of Wurtemberg was pacing to and fro in the apartment where we first found him. His arms were folded upon his broad breast, and his head was bowed.

"By my soul," he uttered to himself, "I cannot afford to give her up. The time is coming when I must have power. Rudolf of Hapsburg, who would once fall at my feet for a favor, now that he wears the imperial crown, means to turn upon his old associates and drive them from their fastnesses. I know that such is his plan. But if I can unite the house of Baden to my interest, I may yet thwart him. And, by the holy rood, I believe I love the gentle girl, too. I never knew that I really loved her until this old flame came along. And Constance loves him. I am sure of that. Why did he turn up just here? But I think I can find a place for him outside of the maiden's chamber. We'll see!"

He had made several turns across the apartment after this, when he was startled by hearing a quick, loud blast upon the horn that hung at the outer gate.

"Ha!" he cried, "that blast was from one who is used to the horn. It may be Rudolf. —— Ah—must he not have met these Crusaders? What a dolt I was in forgetting to ask them. —— Who's here?"

"My lord, the Count of Baden, Sir Otto von Metzinger, and Sir Marco Montani have come; and they bring with them two dead bodies."

"How? Dead men, say you?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then away and show them up here."

"The dead men, my lord?"

"Dead demons!—no. The live knights, I mean."

The messenger withdrew, and ere long afterwards Rudolf of Baden, with his head bound up in a silken scarf; Sir Otto, with his body tortured into an unseemly shape by pain, and the Italian knight entered the apartment.

"How now, Rudolf?" cried the host, in astonishment.

"Has the lady Agnes come?" asked Baden, without seeming to heed the question.

"She has."

"And who came with her?"

"Two crusaders—Sir Engelbert of Marburg, and that popular hero of the Black Eagle."

"Are they here now?"

"They are."

"Where?"

"Why—in their chamber, to be sure."

"Tell me where! Tell me, Everhard!"

"But why, Rudolf? Answer me that first."

"Why? Oh! show them to me! Show me that Black Unknown—and you shall have one the less to feed in the morning! Show me where they are!"

"Be plain, Rudolf."

"And am I not plain? By Saint Paul, you shall see what I mean if you will but show me where they sleep! Come—be not backward now!"

"Plainly, then—you mean to kill the knight?"

"Yes!"

"To murder him in his sleep?"

"If you will have it so. I mean to have my revenge!" Show me the way!"

"Aye, good Everhard," joined in Sir Otto, "show him the way. Oh! O! O! O-o-o-o! The black villain has well nigh taken the life from me!"

"Gentlemen," said Everhard of Wurtemberg, sternly and with a flashing eye, "I thought you knew me better. Though a man had slain my own child, he should not be murdered in his sleep! But explain. What is it?"

Rudolf of Baden knew the Wild Knight well enough to know that he meant now all that he said, and that no power on earth could move him. So he took a seat, and as soon as he could gain his breath he said,—

"Listen, sir, and you shall hear. I was on my way to the convent after Agnes, when, on the little plain of Wayhem, I met the lady in the charge of this Black Knight and his companion, with their two esquires. I told him—the Unknown—that I would relieve him of his charge; but he said no. I then demanded her. He refused. I explained my claim. But he refused still. Just then Sir Otto came upon the scene. He had had a brush with the Black Eagle in the morning. He and Sir John of Mainhardt came together. I told the braggart then if he did not give the maiden up I should take her. He placed himself on the defensive—he and his companion—while they gave Agnes in charge to their esquires. We attacked them——"

"How many of you?"

"Five of us. My good Knight of Bondorf and Sir John of Mainhardt were killed upon the spot; and they would have killed us could they have done it. But as it was they came nigh to it."

"Then, by my soul, they are two brave knights; and—perhaps, dangerous ones. But no more of this, Rudolf. If you have any plans to consummate, you must find some other way. But did you see the Black Knight's face?"

"No. Did you?"

"Yes."

"And who is he? What is he?"

"There I am as ignorant as yourself, save that the face has something familiar about it. It is a marked face, and a handsome one, and not such an one as would be likely to be mistaken for another."

"But this other knight—Engelbert von Marburg, I think—isn't he the one that used to be so much at Heidelberg, when Constance was there with her uncle?"

"He is the same."

"And I wonder if he remembers my sister? Has he seen her?"

"Yes," whispered Everhard, trying to conceal his emotion.

"Ha! And did you see anything?"

"Never mind."

"But there may be something to mind. I want to impress upon *your* mind the very simple fact that this pretty sister of mine has a powerful will of her own; and if she takes a notion to love this fellow, and he tells her he loves her, we shall find her a very Xantippe to manage."

"There is something in that," said the host, half musingly.

"Aye,—and there's one more thing: If this Black Knight does not already love the fair lady of Luxemburg, then I am much mistaken. Did you notice anything of the kind?"

"Did I?" uttered Everhard, starting. During the few hours he spent in the knight's presence, while the maidens had been with them, he had been too much engaged in looking after Constance, even to think of the others. But now that he came to reflect he remembered some passages between Agnes and the Unknown that opened his eyes. And then he remembered, when Agnes went away for the night, that the Crusader held her by the hand only as a lover would do.

"By the holy rood!" he continued, bringing his hands together, "I do remember now. Aye—she loves him, I know; and so does he love her! There must be a most decided stop put to all this!"

"Then show me the way to the chamber where they sleep. Remember—two slight, simple blows may put all the stop that is needed."

"No, no, Rudolf,—not so. Oh! I would not do that to save my own life! But let it be now. On the morrow we may consider the subject further."

The Count of Baden knew that 'twould be useless to argue that point further, so he gave it up, and then he turned his attention to another matter.

"But who, think you, this Mystic Knight can be?" he asked, earnestly. "I have never known of any such in this section?"

"You forget, Rudolf. This fellow has been in Palestine many years. He must have been a mere boy when he went there, for I remember well of hearing, some fourteen or fifteen years ago, of his having saved the life of the King of Jerusalem. He was then known only as the '*Young Duke*,' from the fact that he was a page of the stout Duke of Austria."

"Is he young now?" asked Rudolf, with interest.

"Yes—just in the very morning of prime manhood. He is not a year over thirty, I'll take my oath."

"About thirty," murmured Baden to himself, with his head bowed so low that his face could not be seen. "Ah—" he added, with a relieved look, "he was probably some poor dependent who had wit and courage, and who, with fortune on his side, chanced to make a few favorable hits among those who had the power to promote him."

"I think it more than possible that you are right, Sir Rudolf."

"And he hides his name for effect," resumed the Count of Baden. "He knows that mystery will give a man more consequence than bravery, when coupled with a plebeian name."

"Very likely," added Everhard. "But say—we will sleep upon it, and on the morrow our minds will be clearer. What have you done with the bodies of our two poor knights?"

"They are in the chapel."

"Very well. There let them remain. And now let's to bed."

So, without further remark of any consequence, the company separated, and ere long the Wild Knight was once more alone.

"By my knightly oath," he muttered to himself, "this is bad. We cannot afford to break up this arrangement, to please two needy adventurers. Constance and Agnes both turned from their paths? Oh, no,—this will never do—never. Those are two brave fellows—there is no mistake about that; but that is no reason why we should sacrifice our very lives to their wishes. Oh, no, no, no—never!"

With this remark, accompanied by an emphatic clap of the hands, the knight passed out into the hall where half a dozen men-at-arms were engaged in drawing lots for a small pile of pebble stones. Everhard informed them that the castle was now under their charge, and then passed on. His own chamber was directly under the great tower, and connected with all the corridors on that floor. It was a high-vaulted apartment, with wainscotting of dark, elaborately carved oak, and a floor of stone. There were four windows—two looking to the northward, and two to the westward—commanding a view of all the passes of the range, for some miles, and also of the deep vale between the castle and the main mountain.

The Black Knight and his friend had been placed in a chamber on the same floor, and in the opposite angle of the structure. It was the room which had once been used by the countess, and was now sometimes given to worthy guests, in accordance with a wish expressed by her. When she knew she must die, she called her husband to her, and asked him if he should use that apartment for himself if she left him, and upon his answering in the negative, she begged of him to keep it for the use of worthy wayfarers, bidding him, that he should never turn an applicant away while that apartment was empty.

The host had thrown off his doublet, and was upon the point of sitting down to remove his hose, when he was sure he heard footsteps upon the large stairway. He moved softly to the door, and having opened it, he looked out. He saw that it was one of the guard on his way to the tower, and he returned to his chamber, and ere long afterwards he was buried in profound slumber.

The two crusaders awoke with the sun, and as soon as they had performed their morning ablutions, they walked forth into the wide court. None of the household were yet astir, save the regular sentinels, so our two companions found nothing to obstruct their progress. The view from the wall was grand and sublime in the extreme. On one hand rose the towering, craggy peaks of the mountains, with the mists of the morning gradually rolling away from their bald brows. On the north, stretched away a deep, dark ravine, reaching towards Durmen and Maulbroun; on the east was the gorge, through which the mountain torrent made its way, with rocks and forests breaking up the scene; while to the south, was a continuation of just such huge rocks as that upon which the castle was built; and away in the distance, almost as far as the eye could reach, could be seen the grey turrets of the castle of Metzinger.

The girls were not far behind the two knights in seeking the sweet breath of the morning, for while the latter were returning from the stable, where they had been to see how their horses fared, they saw the maidens upon the western wall, they having just emerged from a door of the dwelling which opened upon the stout parapet. As soon as possible the two knights joined them, and the salulations were free and joyous. Blanche lingered a while, and then upon the plea that she must look after the servants, she left the party. She had wit enough to see that they were in a mood for some particular conversation, and that she would make an odd one in the meeting.

The conversation of Agnes and the Unknown was upon the scene by which they were surrounded, with an occasional interpolation of a passage on nearer and dearer matter. They did not once allude to the subject of their adventure of the day before, nor to the principal actors therein, though they might have done so had they known that those actors were even then in the castle.

In the meantime Constance and Engelbert had wandered away towards the gate around back of the barracks.

"Lady," spoke the brave knight, after the conversation upon other matters had become dull, "you must pardon me if I am bold. But our term of intimacy this time may be short, and ere I leave you, I would set at rest a question which has been present with me for years. You cannot have forgotten the talk of our childish days. You remember, most surely, those bright, joyous hours, when the thoughts of our souls flowed freely, and we painted the future in hope's brightest colors. I can never forget them. The words I spoke then, I could speak now. The years that have passed, have only served to give deeper root to the—the—you will pardon me—to the love I then bore you. And now will you not tell me how stands your own heart in this matter? You will speak plainly, for my happiness demands it."

Constance of Baden gazed down upon the hard rock, and having pondered a few moments, she raised her eyes to her companion's face, and while a rich glow suffused her cheeks and brow, she said,—

"I have not forgotten those scenes. I was a child then, but my love was not a child's love. If I made a promise then, I could not break it now. I have been laughed at because I still held firmly to the faith of your love. I could not help it; something told me you would be true."

"Aye—and I have been, Constance. Oh! thy sweet image has been with me ever, and the thought that thou, too, would'st be true, has nerved me in many a conflict, for it should not be said that the man who bore the rich boon of the love of Constance von Baden, was a coward, or a recreant knight. Dost remember this token, lady?"

As the knight thus spoke, he threw open the lace collar of his purple doublet, and revealed a piece of blue ribbon suspended about his neck, from which hung a small golden cross. The eyes of the maiden beamed more brightly as she saw it, and a joyous look overspread her face.

"Dost remember the words you spoke when you threw this over my head and bade me keep it?"

"Yes," she murmured, in a low, tremulous tone, "I remember them well."

"And they were—'When you come home, show me this, and I shall know our love is unbroken; and it shall be a pledge from me to thee, that I will be thine forever!' Am I not right?"

"Yes."

"Then may I not claim the fulfilment of the pledge?"

With a quick, generous movement, the maiden placed her hand within that of her companion, and without hesitation she said,—

"All within my power I will do. In soul and heart I am thine forever."

"And thy hand—is not that mine, too?"

"Oh! it must be. They would make me wed with this Wild Knight of Wurtemberg."

"Who would do it?"

"My brother."

"He cannot."

"But he is my guardian. I am under his control in all matters of business; and he claims the right even to dispose of my hand."

"He cannot—he shall not do it."

"I know he cannot make me wed; but he has the power to forbid it. Against his command I could not contract a legal marriage."

"And think you he would forbid your marrying with me?"

"I think he would. At all events, he has taken an oath to that effect."

The knight was troubled. For some moments he gazed away into the deep gorge without speaking. But suddenly a new light broke over his features, and in a hopeful tone he said,—

"My friend has promised to help me in this."

"He?—The Black Knight?"

"Yes."

"You have known him long?"

"I have been his constant companion for six years."

"Then tell me who he is."

"Ah—you ask me now a riddle beyond my power to solve. I never heard his name, nor do I know from what part of Germany he came."

"Oh—he must have come from this part, for I know him.—I mean I know those features. But how can he help you? What power can he have?"

"I know not, Constance; only I am sure he would never give a hope if he had not power to do what he proposed. He is a noble-hearted man; a generous and true friend. and a safe guide in the hour of danger."

"But why does he shroud himself in this mystery?"

"I do not know. Only this I know: He will not wear the veil much longer."

Constance was upon the point of replying, when her companion gave a sudden start. and she felt his hand tremble.

"Ha!" he uttered. "Look! Is not that the count, your brother?"

"It is!" the maiden returned, trembling in turn.

"And see—he looks this way. He is angry.'

"Let us go in. I would not meet him now."

Engelbert made no reply, but offering his arm, he started on, and soon gained the great hall, where Agnes and her companion had just arrived.

CHAPTER VIII.

JEALOUSY.

As the Unknown Crusader entered the great hall of the castle, he met Sir Everhard, just coming in from the rear court. Almost at the same moment Rudolf of Baden came in by another door from the balcony. The Black Knight started upon seeing his adversary of the day before, for he had not the least idea that he had reached the castle. Our hero was habited now, in a rich suit of black velvet, and his bearing was proud and erect.

"Ah—Sir Crusader—you are astir early this morning," said Everhard.

"I cannot sleep after the sun is up, my lord," the knight replied. "I have been looking off upon the strange scenery by which you are surrounded here, sir."

"And how does it please you?"

"Much—much; though, in truth, I must say, that for a home, I should like a little more humanity about me."

"Humanity? Did you not see a peasant's cot in the deep vale to the eastward?"

"I did—one."

"Aye. And did you not see the turrets of a castle away to the northward?"

"I did, sir."

"Then what would ye have more? Ha, ha,—that's putting us snug enough. But say—I forgot myself. This is Rudolf, the Count of Baden. Sir Count, this is the Black Eagle of Palestine."

"Aye—I have seen him before," returned Rudolf, struggling hard to appear calm, "though this is the first time I have looked upon his face."

When Rudolf of Baden first saw the face of the Unknown he had scanned it narrowly, and a sudden pallor had overspread his features. He trembled at every joint, and was forced to turn away to hide the strange emotion. He had just succeeded in calming his outward bearing, when the host introduced him; and though the same fearful bounding of the heart followed his second gaze into the face of the Mystic Knight, yet he succeeded in so far governing himself that his emotion was noticed no farther by Everhard than as such as would be natural after the events of the day before.

"Sir Count," spoke the Crusader, frankly, and without anything of ill-feeling, "I trust you will not allow the occurrence of yesterday to make enmity between us; for I could not break the vow I had made. I had pledged my knightly honor that the Lady Agnes should not pass from my charge until I had delivered her in safety to the hands of her uncle and guardian, Everhard von Wurtemberg"

"I blame you not, sir—so let that pass. If you have performed your full vow now, it is well. You have delivered Agnes von Luxemburg to her guardian, and I suppose there your work, so far as the lady is concerned, ends. Am I right?"

"There ends all that I promised our good Abbess of Saint Fulvia to do," was our hero's reply.

"You are evasive, sir," the Count said, nervously, speaking as though anger and fear both operated in his feelings.

"We all have reason to evade some things, Sir Count. If I evade anything it must be something that concerns only myself. Be assured I never evade the truth when there is occasion for speaking it."

"By Saint Peter, Sir Knight of the——"

"Hold, gentlemen!" cried Everhard, "let's have no hard words here. Our guest is quite right, Rudolf. But come—the morning meal is ready; and after that is disposed of, we may find some sport for an hour or so."

When they reached the great banquetting hall, where the breakfast was served, they found Sir Otto and Montani already there, while the three fair maidens were busy in preparing a beverage of hot wine, spice and water.

"Now, gentlemen," said the host, after Engelbert had entered, "I know all that has happened, and if I am not much mistaken I have an interest in your differences. But mind you, we have only friendship here. Beneath my roof there shall be no quarrelling. So—here's to a hearty good fellowship, forgetting all evils, and forgiving all injuries, for the time. Come—the pledge."

Thus speaking, Everhard raised his goblet to his lips, and all followed his example, though Rudolf of Baden drank not. When he set his goblet down it was full. All noticed, but no one spoke. The brow of the host contracted, and a frown gathered upon his face; but he quickly recovered his usual good nature, and the meal passed off without anything further of an unpleasant character.

Ever and anon Rudolf would steal a glance at the Black Knight, and that he was studying his features eagerly was very apparent. And, furthermore, it was equally apparent that he was very deeply interested in the study, for his eyes burned with an intense fire, and his hands might have been seen to clutch nervously about the handles of his knife and fork, as he turned from the gaze. Not only did the host mark these movements, but the Crusader himself saw them all.

When the party arose from the table, the Count of Baden approached Agnes, and requested her to follow him to the balcony. There was a tremulousness in his voice, and his lip was compressed and pale. The maiden hesitated, but only long enough to collect her thoughts. She at once mistrusted the count's intention; and as she followed him out, she had time to nerve herself for the scene. They passed from the banquet-hall into an ante-room, where the servants remained during the time of great feasts, and from hence to the balcony, on the northern side of the building. When they had reached a point beyond the hearing of the servants, Rudolf turned and gazed for some moments into the fair girl's face.

"Lady," he said, at length, in a tone which he evidently meant should have been very calm and dignified, but which lost all but its deep ill-feeling and jealousy, "you will not wonder that I have thus called you out, when I tell you the fear that has operated upon me. I know that this needy adventurer who brought you to the castle is of a fair exterior, and well calculated to please an inexperienced girl. And I believe he would win your love if he could. I have watched the movements of his uneasy, restless eye, and I could not fail to see that he looked upon you with the lecher's gaze."

"Sir!" uttered Agnes, gazing into the man's face with a look of astonishment.

"I have watched him narrowly, Agnes, and I know of what I speak. You will beware of him. Meet him no more. Will you promise me this?"

"I cannot, sir."

"Cannot? What mean you by *cannot*?"

"I mean that I cannot so far forget the dictates of common courtesy as to do that. No, no, Sir Count, you ask of me too much."

"And if I *command*?"

"I should give your command a fair consideration."

"Then it is my command that you speak with the adventurer no more."

"Do you mean with the Knight of the Eagle?"

"Of course I do. Whom else should I mean?"

"Then I can only say you have either mistaken yourself or you have mistaken me. I could not obey such a command."

The count turned very pale, and then very red; and, with a sudden show of anger, he cried:

"You will obey me, lady! By heavens, I believe, if the truth were known, we should find that even now you have suffered the fellow to talk to you of love!——Ha! your look shows it! Why that blush?—and that quick tremor? Aha, lady—so you've had a new flame whispering in your ear! You need not deny it. I can see! Those blushes—those drooping eyes! Ah—— And tears, too!"

The count's impertinent gaze into the maiden's face, and his quick accusation, did call up the rich blood to her cheeks and temples, and to save her soul she could not keep back the emotion. But there was one thing she could do. She knew that in her heart every thought was pure, and she could face the accuser boldly.

"Rudolf of Baden," she said, overcoming her tremulousness with a powerful effort, "what right have you to insult me thus? You betray little manliness when you seek to wound a heart that never conceived harm for you."

"Wound your heart? Look at my own heart, unfeeling girl. What think you of one who would wantonly break a heart that is only and wholly hers?"

"I should say she was unworthy of confidence."

"Then you have spoken your own sentence. How think you I can brook the presence of this fellow when I know he seeks to rob me of one whom I love?"

"I will not affect to misunderstand you, sir, for I know to what you allude. If you have ever held a hope of gaining my hand, you have held it without any permission of mine. I never loved you, and never can. In all that you have done towards claiming my hand you have gone directly against my wishes, and of late you have known that you were paining me by your attentions."

"Then blame your father, and not me," said Rudolf, warmly. "By the power of the Holy Church, you shall not balk me now! I have built my hopes of future good upon my union with you, and you know, and have long known, that such was my plan of life."

"Be that as it may, sir, there is one thing more you have known, and that is, that all has been done in that line against my wishes."

"I have not known it. You speak falsely now. I have supposed you wished to obey the will of your father."

"I never gave you grounds for such a supposition."

"You have; and until this needy, nameless adventurer came along, you thought not of objecting to our marriage!"

There was a quick response upon the fair girl's lips, but she restrained its utterance; and having regained her composure, she said:

"You forget yourself, sir, when you use such language to a lady. Let me return. No good can come of a continuance of this meeting."

"Hold, lady. You escape me not so easily. Be ye assured that I am not to be thus befooled with impunity. In the first place, you know that you are to be my wife."

"There you are wrong, sir."

"How? Wrong? Do ye not mean to keep your word?"

"I never gave any word to that effect."

"You did! You know you did! And let me tell you, you shall find that there is power to keep you to your word! You wish to go—go! And as you go carry with you the assurance that my wife you must be! I swear it by all I hold sacred on earth, and by all I hope for in heaven! Now go! Sharp eyes will be upon you, and stout hands ready, to enforce the will of those who have the right to command!"

Thus speaking Rudolf of Baden turned away and walked quickly to the great hall. He searched there a moment, and then went out into the passage where the guards were, and inquired for Everhard. Having been informed that the host had just passed out into the court, he went out and near the barracks he saw the Wild Knight conversing with one of his grooms. He approached him at once and called him aside.

"By the powers of darkness, Everhard," the young count cried, bringing his hands together with a mad expression, "we have a fine mess here in the castle. I have just come from the lady Agnes. She loves this adventurer, and will not deny it; and for me, she hurls defiance in my face. What shall we do?"

"We must get rid of them as soon as convenient, and then see that they never gain admission here again. But let me inform you, Rudolf, that you are not alone in agony of heart. Your sister has a strange fancy for the other adventurer."

"I know it. But mark me, Everhard,—you mean to sustain me in my claim upon Agnes's hand?"

"Of course I do."

"Then the sooner these fellows leave, the better."

"Of course. But say, Rudolf,—what have you found in the face of this Black Knight that moves you so?"

"Moves me?" uttered Baden, starting, but quickly recovering himself.

"Aye,—I noticed your face, and I tell you plainly that never before did I see you so moved. Why—had I not known your nature better, I should have said that you were stricken with a deadly fear."

"Fear?—Me?—Ha, ha, ha." The young count laughed, but it was a ghastly performance, and, so far as showing lightness of heart was concerned, had better by far been let alone.

"Oh—don't try to laugh it off," urged Everhard, seriously. "I have marked that strange face, too, and I would know who he is that owns it. It is familiar to me. I know it. I cannot be mistaken. It is not a face to be confounded with the physiognomy of another. Come—you have marked the same; and now how run your suspicions? Who is he?"

Rudolf gazed eagerly into the face of his companion as though he would read his every thought; and the expression upon his own face showed plainly that for a few moments he was ill at ease; but finally, when he had assured himself that the other held no fixed suspicions, but only asked the question for information, he became more composed, and in a lighter tone he said,—

"I was struck with the face, as you were, but can make nothing of it; and as for the rest of your proposition, if you were in my place, and had received the insult which I have received at his hands, your countenance might be worked upon when you sat directly before him."

"Ah—yes—I see," returned the host. "I am aware you must be —— Ha! I had forgotten. To-morrow is the day for the first tournament of the season. Let them stop, and you may have a tilt at him."

"A tilt? Yes—so I can," replied Rudolf, dubiously. "And so I might play at the game of souls with Satan. No, no, Everhard—I hold no tilt with him. But you might do it."

"And so I will if he will enter the lists. By my halidom, if he is as good as he looks, he might hold me a tough bout. What think you?"

"Why—he is a stout fellow. It were folly in me to deny that. But he is no match for thee. I doubt if the empire contains a knight who could unhorse you."

"Not without being himself unhorsed, at all events," uttered the Wild Knight, emphatically, and with as much feeling as though some one had boasted the doubtful power.

Everhard of Wurtemberg had never yet been overcome in the lists. His frame was not only massive and compact, his muscles tough and steel-like, his physical strength immense, and his experience in arms well nigh perfect; but his long and continuous life of wild and reckless adventure had served to give him a nerve and assurance which won half the battle ere it was commenced.

Rudolf of Baden started off across the court, walking with quick, nervous strides, with his head bowed, and his hands clasped before him. When he came back he wore a strange look upon his face, and his deep-set eye burned intensely.

"We will have them stay to the tournament," he said, in an eager tone.

"Of course we will," Everhard replied. "But what strange freak has crossed your mind now?"

"Nothing, nothing. Only—a—I have derived some satisfaction from the belief that the Black Knight will enter the lists!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

TO MY LOVE.

A thousand eyes of the starry skies,
Smile down from the blue above;
But brighter the smile of thy tender eyes,
My darling, my own true love:
Heaven is over the stars, I know,
For many the tokens reveal it,
I see in thine eyes a heaven below—
In my innermost heart I feel it.

I loved thee as maiden, tenderly, true;
I love thee as wife, still dearer;
The summit of bliss, that's ever in view,
Each hour in thy presence grows nearer:
O, climb! let us climb with truth and trust,
'Till death shall our journeyings sever,
And surely we'll meet in the heaven of love,
To mingle our loving forever.

C. D. STUART.

HELPS TO HAPPINESS.

As nothing is more natural than for every one to desire to be happy, it is not to be wondered at that the wisest men in all ages have spent so much time to discover what happiness is, and wherein it chiefly consists. An eminent writer reckons up no less than two hundred and eighty-eight different opinions upon this subject; and another after having given us a long catalogue of the notions of several philosophers, endeavors to show the absurdity of all of them, without establishing any thing of his own.

That which seems to have made so many err in this case, is the resolution they took to fix a man's happiness to one determined point; whereas it cannot be made up but by the concurrence of several particulars.

We shall readily allow Virtue the first place, as she is the mother of Content. It is this which calms our thoughts, and makes us survey ourselves with ease and pleasure. Mere virtue, however, is not alone sufficient to make a man happy. It must be accompanied with at least a moderate provision of all the necessaries of life, and not ruffled and disturbed by bodily pains. A fit of the rheumatism was sharp enough to make a stoic cry out, "that Zeno, his master, taught him false, when he told him that pain was not evil."

But, besides this, virtue is so far from being alone sufficient to make a man happy, that the excess of it in some particulars, joined to a soft and feminine temper, may often give us the deepest wounds, and chiefly contribute to render us uneasy. We might instance in pity, love, and friendship. In the two last passions it often happens, that we so entirely give up our hearts, as to make our happiness wholly depend upon another person; a trust for which no human creature, however excellent, can possibly give us a sufficient security.

The man, therefore, who would be truly happy, must, beside an habitual virtue, attain to such a "strength of mind," as to confine his happiness within himself, and keep it from depending upon others. A man of this make will perform all those good-natured offices that could have been expected from the most bleeding pity, without being so far affected at the common misfortunes of human life, as to disturb his own repose. His actions of this kind are so much more meritorious than another's, as they flow purely from a principle of virtue, and a sense of his duty; whereas a man of a softer temper, even while he is assisting another, may in some measure be said to be relieving himself.

A man endowed with that "strength of mind" we are here speaking of, though he leaves it to his friend or sweetheart to make him still more happy, does not put it in the power of either to make him miserable.

From what has been already said, it will also appear, that nothing can be more weak than to place our happiness in the applause of others, since by this means we make it wholly independent of ourselves. People of this humor, who place their chief felicity in reputation and applause, are also extremely subject to envy, the most painful as well as the most absurd of all passions.

The surest means to attain that "strength of mind," and independent state of happiness we are recommending, is a virtuous mind sufficiently furnished with ideas to support solitude, and keep up an agreeable conversation with itself. Learning is a very great help on this occasion, as it lays up an infinite number of notions in the memory, ready to be drawn out, and set in order upon any occasion. The mind often takes the same pleasure in looking over these her treasures, in augmenting and disposing them into proper forms, as a prince does in a review of his army.

At the same time we must own, that as a mind thus furnished, feels a secret pleasure in the consciousness of its own perfection, and is delighted with such occasions as call upon it to try its force, a lively imagination shall produce a pleasure very little inferior to the former in persons of much weaker heads. As the first, therefore, may not be improperly called, "the heaven of a wise man," the latter is extremely well represented by our vulgar expression, which terms it, "a fool's paradise." There is, however, this difference between them, that as the first naturally produces that strength and greatness of mind, so essential to render a man happy, the latter is ruffled and discomposed by every accident, and lost under the most common misfortune.

It is this "strength of mind" that is not to be overcome by the changes of fortune, that rises at the sight of dangers, and could make Alexander, when his army mutinied, bid his soldiers return to Macedon, and tell their countrymen that they had left their king conquering the world; since for his part he could not doubt of raising an army wherever he appeared. It is this that chiefly exerts itself when a man is most oppressed, and gives him always in proportion to whatever malice or injustice would deprive him of. It is this, in short, that makes the virtuous man insensibly set a value upon himself, and throws a halo over his words and actions, that will at last command esteem, and give him a greater ascendant over others, than all the advantages of birth and fortune.

HOW TO RULE A TARTAR WIFE.

We may first premise that you must be perfectly cool, and not in the slightest degree brutish, or you will signally fail in your object.

When your young wife is in the tantrums, do not pretend to take the slightest notice of the fit but begin to whistle or sing (the former is the best) some slow pathetic air; and if she speak *to* you, not AT you, answer her at once endearingly. This alone will in most cases succeed after two or three trials; but should this not do, then take up your hat and go gently out, but mind, do not come in to the next meal. Dine or tea out, and then return; should your wife begin again, try whistle the 2nd, and if this won't do, go out again to the next meal. Now mind you do *not* go to any friend's house, for many obvious reasons; one of them is, to avoid arousing any jealous feelings—in fact we could give you forty reasons why you should go to an eating-house for the meals. Should you still be unsuccessful, at the proper time go to bed silently, and immediately pretend to be asleep. At breakfast the next morning, reason calmly and gently with your wife; that is, if she gets up, if not, let her lie as long as she likes, and do not take the slightest notice of it: eat your breakfast alone, under the sure conviction that you have already nearly mastered her. Should she, however, get up, do as we have said; and if she still remain obdurate try whistle the 3rd, and so on, as the day before. If still all to no purpose, you must now proceed to more vigorous means; viz.: sleep from home—be sure, however, to go to some unquestionably respectable place as near your own house as possible. Return home the next morning to breakfast, and if questioned as to where you have been, answer her very quietly, and above all things *speak the truth*. A thousand to one that you will now come to an explanation; but should she be still unbending, try whistle the 4th, and, if necessary, sleep out again at the same house, and in fact persist in this course as long as necessary. The *most* obdurate minx that we have yet heard of was fairly vanquished by her husband in four days, and yet she was terrible, and he was mild even to a fault.

We will now conclude, Mr. Husband, with a few words of advice to yourself. You cannot possibly subdue your wife if you lose either your temper or your gentleness; but with them and firmness there is no chance of failing. Having done this, all will then depend upon yourself, for you may mould her as you like; yet surely you cannot expect your wife to be good if you are bad. Most women, to their honor be it spoken and acknowledged, are naturally prone to be amiable, gentle, and loving; cameleon-like, they faithfully reflect the color as it shines upon them. You must never expect your wife to study your happiness if you neglect hers; and in order to promote it, you cannot do too much, you cannot be too unselfish. We will not allude to any *vicious habits*, for with them *there never can be happiness*; but if you are a smoker, for instance, and your young wife does not like smoking, (and very few young wives do like it), why leave it off, and the sooner the better, for it is a dirty and low habit.

Lastly, never be guilty of any action that will lower you in your own esteem, or degrade you in the eyes of your wife.

AN OLD MAN.

TAKE CARE OF THE BODY.

A man should take care that his body be not too soft for his climate; but rather, if possible, harden and season himself beyond the degree of cold wherein he lives. Daily experience teaches us how we may inure ourselves by custom to bear the extremities of the weather without injury. The inhabitants of Nova Zembla go naked without complaining of the bleakness of the air in which the are born, as the armies of the northern nations keep the field all winter. The softest of our ladies expose their arms and necks to the open air, which the men could not do without catching cold, for the want of being accustomed to it. The whole body by the same means might contract the same firmness and temper. The Scythian that was asked how it was possible for the inhabitants of his frozen climate to go naked, replied, "Because we are all over face." Locke advises parents to have their children's feet washed every morning in cold water, which might probably prolong hundreds of lives.

A cold bath would be one of the most healthful exercises in the world, were it made use of in the education of youth. It would make their bodies more than proof to the injuries of the air and weather. It would be something like what the poets tell us of Achilles, whom his mother is said to have dipped, when he was a child, in the river Styx. The story adds, that this made him invulnerable all over, excepting that part which his mother held in her hand during this immersion, and which by that means lost the benefit of these hardening waters. Our common practice runs in a quite contrary method. We are perpetually softening ourselves by good fires and warm clothes.

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 18.

OUR ONLY TERMS.—Single copies, $2 per annum; two copies, $3; four copies, $6; eight copies, $12; Postmasters and others who get up clubs can afterwards add single copies at $1,50. The party who sends us $12 for a club of eight copies, (all sent at one time,) will be entitled to a copy *free*. It will be useless for parties to write us insisting on our taking large clubs at lower rates. An elegant family paper like the LEDGER, (containing no advertisements,) cannot be afforded at less than these terms. We do not want any clubs formed in towns where there are news-offices established. Terms, invariably in advance. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year.

NO TRAVELLING AGENTS.—We employ no travelling agents. If any party pretends hereafter to act as such you can put him down as a swindler. The best way to get our paper is at the book and periodical stores; but if you happen not to be within reach of one, then you can send us two dollars, and we will mail it to you.

WE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE for all monies sent us in REGISTERED letters, and not otherwise. It costs but *five cents* to get a letter registered at any post-office—and this *insures* the party sending money against loss.

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MATTERS OF TASTE.

The LEDGER circulates largely among those who have homes of their own. It reaches the sturdy honest farmer, happy and independent in the midst of his harvests, and orchards, and flocks and herds; it reaches the strong-handed and frank-hearted artizan and mechanic, the enterprising merchant and trader, and the professional man. All these, as we hope and wish for them, have homes of their own. Therefore we wish to say a word on matters of taste. We might, perhaps, better call them matters of essential profit and enjoyment.

If one of our readers were passing through a village street, or over a more rural highway, and saw on the one side a cottage, wreathed with vines and flowers, and surrounded by spicy shrubs and pleasant shade and fruit trees, and on the other side as good, or even a better cottage, devoid of all these external natural graces, which would his judgment, his sympathies, and his romance naturally incline him to? Who can doubt that the cabin, in the midst of a flowery-garden, would be chosen before even a palace in a waste place? Yes, and he would, if he were a man of taste and sense, were he bent on renting or purchasing a home, weigh the vines and blossoms, the shrubs and the fruit-trees in the balance of intrinsic value, and they would overbear much size and show of mere tenement.

Now, how cheap, easy and simple a thing it would be, especially in villages, and in the country, where ground space is accessible, to have every home decked with vines and flowers, and all the elegancies and luxuries of nature known to garden and lawn. All that is required is a little care, a little patience, and a little time. Some taste is, to be sure, requisite, but we shall not insult our readers by supposing one of them to lack taste in such a matter. Apart from the delight and solid enjoyment these decorations afford to the cultivating lover of the beautiful, they have a charm for every casual passer-by, compelling the notice we so much covet in this world, when all else we may have offers no attraction nor theme for comment.

But the value of grounds thus ornamented, for use as well as for beauty, and of homes thus encircled, does not stop here. All these adornments, pleasing to soul and sense, have a money-value in the market. More and more is it becoming a fact, that the farmer can sell his ornamented grounds for hundreds and thousands more than they would otherwise command. Barrenness around the homestead is fast ceasing to be either commended or tolerated by persons of good taste and sense. We could instance more than one case, where ten years of care (not annoying or expensive) and taste, have added ten thousand dollars to the value of fifty or an hundred—or even less acres of ground. And the addition consisted chiefly in fruit-trees, shade-trees, shrubbery and flowers. All these can be compassed with a little pains by the poorest man who owns a plot of ground. And no man lives who does not idly or viciously waste more hours and days than would add all this beauty and value to his home.

We would, however, commend this subject to serious thought, for higher reasons than money can measure. Is there nothing precious in the beautiful and fragrant, whether they bring dollars or not? Is not the enhancement of home-pleasure the great thing, after all—and what more renders home attractive and delightful than the surrounding of it with forms of beauty; with that which exalts, while it charms, the mind and the senses? The farm-house, the mechanic's cottage, and the merchant's villa, are alike made more lovely and desirable, decorated as we have pictured. We hope and believe, therefore, that our poor suggestions may cause more than one tree, and vine, and shrub to be added to the earth's rich and beautiful garmenting. If so, we shall be repaid.

FASHION.

Some one says "Commerce is King." Not so—*Fashion* is King. Fashion is king everywhere; from policies of princes down to the circumference of hoops, and the number of flounces on a woman's gown. Trade, commerce, agriculture, science, art and literature, are all conducted after a fashion. A man is clad from head to foot after a fashion. Public opinion is a thing of fashion, and the preacher gets his crowded and rich congregations from fashion. No matter what is comfort or necessity, everything must have a degree of fashion. "To be out of fashion is to be out of the world," is no joke. It is just what half the world believe, and the principle they act upon. The fussy, long or bobtailed-coated dandy on the promenade, is no more a devotee of fashion, in his sphere, than is the plain quiet Quaker in his. The acts, words, frills, and furbelows of each and all are governed, "to a dot," by omnipotent fashion—a fashion that has examples and imitators. Fashion is a most imperious ruler; and the only way to get justice from a Court or Common Council, disinterested advice from a physician, and straightforward, honest advice from a lawyer, will be to make justice, truth and honesty fashionable.

POST-OFFICE STAMPS.—We are overrun with five, ten, and twelve cent stamps, and will not receive any more of them for subscriptions to the LEDGER. We do not object to taking a few *three* cent stamps occasionally, (to make change,) although we look upon them as a nuisance, as it is difficult to sell them. It is a mistaken idea that the Post-Office will buy or redeem stamps of any kind. We will sell $200 worth of ten cent stamps *cheap!* Who will sustain Uncle Sam's credit?

AN ACCURSED SPIRIT.

Who, of our readers, that has lived to man's or woman's estate, that has not had superabounding proof that the "intoxicating cup" has been to man a most accursed spirit? Where is the hamlet, the village, or the city that has not borne witness to its desolation? War has not taken so many lives, nor exhausted so many treasuries, nor brought so fearful widowhood and orphanage, and poverty, and misery, and shame. Famine and pestilence have been feeble by its side.

Look into yon hovel; what pale, haggard form of woman is that, shrinking in her rags, with children, blanch-faced and starving, clinging around her, and from what shrinks she? Oh! can it be that she *was* young and beautiful, well-beloved and happy, when, in the dawning summer of life, she gave her heart, her hand, her all, to one who vowed to love, cherish, and protect her? Can it be she *was* like our own happy sisters and daughters? Aye! even so. And for a season, peace, joy and plenty, went with her into a new home. Children budded and blossomed around her, awakening to musical life-chords in her heart, until then to her unknown. And a manly heart beat to hers, and a manly, strong hand was her stay and support. How much of Heaven might concenter in such a circle of souls, knit and bound together by every holy tie.

But intoxication came! black, leperous, stealthily and serpent-like. It touched his lips, who had sworn at the marriage altar. Down into his heart it hissed, and up into his brain it seethed, and he reeled from the circle of home, only to return a poor degraded creature. Poverty came and crouched, shivering, by the hearth-stone; childhood was blasted, and shame and grief filled a wife's and a mother's heart. Who does not shudder at the bare thought of such an end!

PRIDE OF DRESS.

We are not among those croakers who are constantly lamenting the tendency towards the expensiveness in materials of dress, complained of as characteristic of our day. If worn by people whose pecuniary ability justifies the cost, we admire rich broadcloths, and silks, and furs, and such too as give evidence of a degree of artistic skill, in the making, calling for large pay to the tailor, the dressmaker, and the furrier. The constantly varying form and fashion of articles of dress, which is also a characteristic of the time, presents quite another question. So does the absorption of thought and feeling—the complete monopolization of them, we might say—which dress appears to produce on certain circles. *It* indicates that they really take pride in their mere outward appearance—in other and more peculiar phrase, are "proud of their fine clothes."

This is a pitiable weakness. As such it cannot be too frequently condemned. It has been severely satirized, though, we are sorry to say, with too little success. The fable of the sheep clothed in a golden fleece, mistaking the admiration of the crowd as attracted by itself, instead of its artificial covering, was an arrow of ridicule well pointed and aimed.

Would that the weak-minded victims of fashion, referred to, could feel the force of it sufficiently, and be brought to the consciousness that it is their fine clothes, rather than themselves, that secure them the attention which they receive! If they *could*, then would they see the need of greater attention to the development of all that belongs to their *selfhood*. Individual culture of intellect and heart—true greatness and nobleness of soul—these are attainments worth striving for! No artizan can build them up for the one who pays his price. They are not things of price, but are beyond all computation of values. Having relation to the "immortal mind," they too are immortal. Compared with *these*, "pride of dress" is more than contemptible.

IS IT GOOD?

The occasional publishment, by leading journals, of the details of criminal and scandalous trials, has suggested to the minds of many the question, "Is it Good?" Is it promotive of public morality to make the public familiar with whatever is gross and indecent—with much that is equally shocking and disgusting to virtue and sensibility? We doubt if it is good—we greatly fear that this rank, pestiferous seed of knowledge grows but an evil harvest—whether as regards public morality or the purity of private life and thought. Thousands of morbid minds are ever awaiting, like buzzards, a carcass for their dirty feast; and these scandalous court-cases are so many devil-sends to excite their pruriency, and fatten the low and grovelling elements of their nature. As to the right-minded residue of society, we do not believe they can be made more virtuous by public exhibitions of the depths of vice, any more than we believe that public executions abridge private murders—as all experience attests they do not.

A DEVIATION FROM OUR RULES.—Our readers will observe, by turning to our seventh page, that we deviate from our rules this week by inserting an advertisement. We will explain: The late Wm. H. Levison, editor of the *New York Picayune*, was a friend of ours—when living, he always spoke a good word for the LEDGER—and now that he is "no more," and his widow continues to publish the paper, we wish to benefit his family; hence the gratuitous insertion of the advertisement of the New York Picayune this week. The Picayune is the best paper of its kind, that has ever been started in this country. Among its contributors, are the celebrated Doesticks, the Triangle, and other well-known writers. If you wish to subscribe, enclose a dollar bill in a letter, and address it to the Picayune office, 114 Nassau street, New York.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

GIRLS' BOARDING SCHOOLS.

Had I twenty daughters, which I regret to say I have not, not one of them should ever enter a "Boarding-school." (I beg pardon, I should say "Institute;" schools are exploded; every two-year-older learns his A B C now at an "Institute," though that institute, when hunted down, may consist of a ten-feet-square basement room;) but this is a digression.

To every mother who is contemplating sending her daughter to a boarding-school I would say: let neither your indolence, nor the omnipotent voice of fashion, nor high-sounding circulars, induce you to remove her from under your own personal care and supervision, at a time when the physique of this future wife and mother requires a lynx-eyed watchfulness on your part, which no Institute ever has—ever will supply. This is a point which I am astonished that parents seem so utterly to overlook. Every mother knows how fatal wet feet, or insufficient clothing may be to a young girl at the critical age, at which they are generally sent away to school. It is not enough that you place india-rubbers, thick-soled shoes, and flannels, in the trunk which bears the little exile company; they will not insure her from disease *there*. It is not enough that you say to her, "My dear, be careful of your choice of companions," when she *has* no choice; when her bed-fellow, and room-mates—the latter often three or four in number—are what chance and the railroads send; for what teacher, with the best intentions, ever gives this subject the attention which it deserves, or which a mother's anxious heart asks? That the distant home of her daughter's room-mates is located within the charmed limits of fashion; that a carriage with liveried servants, (that disgusting libel on Republicanism,) stands daily before their door; that the dresses of these room-mates are made in the latest style, and their wrists and ears decked with gold and precious stones—is an affirmative answer to these questions to satisfy a true mother?

No—and it is not the blushing country maiden, with her simple wardrobe, and simpler manners, whom that mother has to fear for her child's companion or bed-fellow. It is the over-dressed, vain, vapid, brainless offshoot of upstart aristocracy, who would ridicule the simple gingham in which that country girl's mother studied geography, and which fabric she very properly considers quite good enough for her child, and which is much more appropriate in the school-room than silk or satin. It is this child of the upstart rich mother, whose priceless infancy and childhood has been spent with illiterate servants; with the exception of the hour after dessert, when she was reminded that she had a mother, by being taken in an embroidered robe to be exhibited for a brief space to her guests. It is this girl, whose childhood, as I said, has been passed with servants, peeping into the doubtful books with which doubtful servants often beguile the tedious hours (for there are bad servants as well as bad masters and mistresses)—this girl, lying awake in her little bed, hearing unguarded details of servants' amours, while her mother dances away the hours so pregnant with fate to that listening child. It is such a girl, more to be pitied than blamed, whose existence is to be recognized by her thoughtless mother only, when her "coming out," delayed till the latest possible period, forces her reluctantly to yield to a younger aspirant her own claims to admiration. This girl whose wealth, and the social position arising from it, so dazzles the eyes of proprietors of "Institutes" that they are incapable of perceiving, or unwilling to admit, her great moral and mental delinquencies;—it is *such* a companion that a true mother has to fear for her pure-minded, simple-hearted young daughter, leaving for the first time the guarded threshold and healthful atmosphere of home.

And when after months have passed—and insufficient exercise,* imperfect ventilation, and improper companionship, have transformed her rosy, healthy, simple-hearted child, to a pale, languid, *spineless*, dressy young woman, with a smattering of fashionable accomplishments, and an incurable distaste of simple, home pleasures—will it restore the bloom to her cheek, the spring to her step, the fresh innocence to her heart, to say, "but the school was fashionable and *so* well recommended?"

FANNY FERN.

* Is a formal, listless walk, in a half-mile-procession, to answer the purpose of *exercise* for young, growing girls confined at least ten hours a-day over their lessons, and crowded at night into insufficient sleeping-rooms?—from which the highest prices paid for tuition, so far as my observation extends, furnish no immunity.

MIS-ALLIANCES.

The late marriage of Miss Boker to her father's turned-off coachman has excited much discussion as to the propriety of the alliance. Marriages in defiance of the laws of caste, and against the fact of social inequality, have seldom been happy ones. It is not sufficient to say that this is a free country, and everybody is on a level, for in spite of human institutions and philosophies, God has created wide differences in the diverse natures of our great brotherhood. If nothing but obscure origin or poverty could be urged against a man, we should say he might claim to wed or walk with the noblest; for *man* can rise above obscurity and poor fortune; but we do think that there is an "eternal fitness" to be considered in all human relations, and we think, also, that in all mis-alliances—being such on the score of moral and intellectual inequality—there is an eternal unfitness. We take it for granted that, in this era of light and privilege, especially in this country, a man whose industrial aspirations are satisfied with a livery and the life and associations of a stable, is not a "meet" companion for an intelligent, accomplished and properly spirited woman, and though he may, by whatever means, succeed to the hand of such a woman, every considerate mind must protest against his success, as destined to produce more evil than good. It is a violation of the everlasting law of propriety, which is not so much the creation of society as it is the rule of our common instincts. Such matches are not made in heaven, nor in any council of concord, but are a breach of the divine and social cognizances of our nature. Still, we think the father of Miss Boker acted unwisely in endeavoring to annul the marriage of his daughter with Dean, after the nuptial ceremony had been performed, and she was publicly heralded as his lawful wife. He should have made the best of an unfortunate event—taken the man and educated him. It is true, it is a bitter pill to take one's own coachman into the family as a son-in-law, but what else could be done, under similar circumstances, more creditable to a parent, or more agreeable to his feelings, unless he preferred summarily to disinherit his daughter?

OF all the delicate sensations the mind is capable of, none, perhaps, will surpass that which attends the relief of an avowed enemy.

MARRIAGE.

The well ordered, happy family, must ever be a noble, though lesser, type of the most perfect and prosperous communities and states. The laws which rule so easily and harmoniously, in that little circle, are the effusions of that proper love and care for the well-being of all its members, which should be the paramount spirit in all legislation and government. And the best development of the family, depends largely upon the tender and confiding unity of its heads—upon their being ever impressed with the awful sacredness of that marriage relation, which not only "joins two loving hearts," but which devolved on the possessors of those hearts a fearful power over the "issues of life,"—and therewith, a responsibility no longer limited to their individual selves. Civilization has advanced and triumphed most where the Christian institute of marriage has been most respected. There the affections and the moralities have exhibited their best developments, and sensuality—as in no other range of society—has failed of power to creep in—making of man, a brute, and of woman, a play-thing and slave.

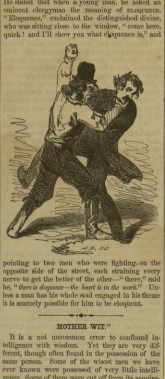
Let but the Christian institution of marriage be universally practiced and respected, and woman will have achieved a possession of rights and power, such as mere legal statutes can never confer. No philosophic observer can fail of feeling, regretfully, that, even in our own country—the fairest in Christendom—marriage is not invested with sufficient sanctity. Whether it be divine or human—as an institution—marriage, as practiced in all Christian lands, has proved itself the best adapted to human happiness, and the most perfect in all its fruits. Yet there are those among us—and not a few, who hold its obligations light, and scoff at the idea of its being essential to sound morality in society. The broad margin of liberty and power—through divorce—given by the law-makers of all our states, to annul the marriage covenant, is a most conclusive proof that the institution has not the influence and sanctity it deserves.

Every divorce, decreed for other than the most palpably imperative reasons, is a blow at the heart of society—a wound in its most tender and vital point. Yet fresh efforts are made periodically to further facilitate divorcement, and it is a sad thing to say, that woman's voice is not unheard in this struggle to beat down the bulwark of the family and the state. *Divorce*—is a word that ought to be considered wicked and hateful. Above all, woman should frown upon every plea and sympathy for its extension. Her safety and exaltation are bound up in that "holiest of relations," and for the little that she may suffer, undivorced, much will she gain and enjoy in due time, by insisting steadily and sternly upon the sacredness of marriage—upon its being a bond, which, save under rare and extreme circumstances, death alone can sever.

It is not our purpose to discuss the many evils and miseries flowing from a lax public sentiment on this subject—our observant readers will have traced these among their reflections on the imperfections of society. Our object is to utter our protest in favor of the extremest sacredness of the marriage institution, and against adding to the already too numerous facilities for divorce. We would have marriage revered in the family, and in society, and made a matter of the most serious public record, as well as private personal contract. The Bond street tragedy has developed a case, which, of itself, should prompt our legislators to more carefully consider the marriage question—Marriage! the most vital of domestic and moral institutions.

THE SECRET OF ELOQUENCE.

If the mind be full—if there be real matter within, crowding and glowing for utterance, a man's speech is likely to have a pith, directness, and force, otherwise extremely hard of attainment. Dr. McCartee, the venerable pastor of Westminster church, in Twenty-second street, related an anecdote last Sabbath morning, illustrative of this. He stated that when a young man, he asked an eminent clergyman the meaning of ELOQUENCE. "Eloquence," exclaimed the distinguished divine, who was sitting close to the window, "come here, quick! and I'll show you what eloquence is," and pointing to two men who were fighting on the opposite side of the street, each straining every nerve to get the better of the other—"there," said he, "*there is eloquence—the heart is in the work.*" Unless a man has his whole soul engaged in his theme it is scarcely possible for him to be eloquent.



MOTHER WIT."

It is a not uncommon error to confound intelligence with wisdom. Yet they are very different, though often found in the possession of the same person. Some of the wisest men we have ever known were possessed of very little intelligence. Some of them were cut off from its acquirement by incapacity to read. But still their judgment, in the affairs of every-day life, was so reliable that it was sought for by even people of education. It might have been said of them, that they had more wisdom in their little fingers than many book-worms had in their crowded and crammed brains. Their sense was "common-sense." It had its origin in careful observations of facts, and dispassionate comparisons of and deductions from them.

One of the poets recognizes the distinction we have been insisting on, when he tells us that—

> "Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
> Have oftimes no connection."

Wisdom and intelligence should go together. But, where they go alone, wisdom has greatly the advantage. It is but another name for that "*mother wit*" which is the wise man's birthright.

CURRENT ITEMS.

IN Thibodeaux Parish (La.) Miss Marie Laroche, a young lady, who was crossing a field belonging to her father's estate, suddenly heard a furious bellowing behind her. On turning to see whence it came, she discovered a large Devonshire bull pawing the ground and shaking his head at her, as though about to rush upon and destroy her. He was not more than twenty rods distant, and it was at least forty rods to the nearest fence. Without delay the affrighted girl fled, and the Devonshire at once gave chase. It was a race for life, and the infuriated animal rapidly gained upon the fugitive. Believing her destruction inevitable, the poor girl fainted and fell to the earth. At that moment a company of plantation hands came in sight, and by their shouts and the hurling of clubs and stones frightened the bull from his intended victim, and carried her safely home, where she was soon restored to consciousness.

A POOR laborer, in Newburgh, recently found a pocket-book containing several hundred dollars. He at once set about finding the owner, whom he soon discovered to be a New York gentleman on a temporary visit to the place. On looking over the money, the owner accused the poor man of having stolen five dollars of it, which the latter denied with indignation. On again counting the money, it was found to be all right; and then the New-Yorker asked the poor man who had restored to him his lost money, *to take a glass of beer with him as a reward!*

THE last news from the French in Algeria comprises an account of a grand lion hunt, by a company of officers, private soldiers, and Arabs. An old lion had been desolating the cattle-pens of the latter for some months; hence the hunt, in which great sport was anticipated. The lion was found and attacked; and he attacked back again, killing four Arabs, and severely lacerating two French officers and one private soldier; but he was at last slain, and his carcass paraded in triumph through the country.

THERE seems to be most horrible destitution among the poorer classes in France, notwithstanding the grand rhetorical flourishes of the Emperor about "peace and prosperity." A Marseilles journal tells a sickening story of a poor family in that city, consisting of a widowed mother and three children, (the eldest seven and the youngest two years old,) who perished from starvation, in a miserable cellar, and when found were themselves partially devoured by rats.

THE British Government have instructed their Minister to the United States, Lord Napier, to cherish the utmost amity and amiability towards the government and people of this country, and do his best to bring about a condition of cordial friendship between the two nations. Verily, Brother Jonathan is becoming a personage of some consequence to the monarchists of the Old World.

THE last news from Oregon contains afflicting statements in regard to the condition of some of the remote settlements in that Territory, the inhabitants of which, separated by dense forests and swollen and impassable rivers from their friends, and exposed to the attacks of hostile Indians, are reported as suffering all the horrors of frontier war, destitution and famine.

OWING to the difficulties between China and England and the United States, the ports of the former country are closed against all foreigners, and consequently the exportation of tea is almost entirely stopped. This is causing a great advance in the price of that article; and unless the "outside barbarians" shall seize the tea-growing regions, we shall be entirely destitute of our common beverage.

ABOUT the best place in the world at this time for men of great practical and scientific talents seems to be Russia. The Emperor Alexander is reported as giving the greatest possible encouragements to enter his service and make that country their home. Many Americans and Frenchmen are now in his service, and the number of such is said to be constantly increasing.

IN Hunterdon County (Va.) a poor shoemaker, named Couenhoffer, was, a short time since, boiling tar to make wax, and unluckily spilling some water in it, the tar boiled over into the fire and exploded; and a portion of it hitting the poor man in the face, burned off his nose and so injured his eyes that it is supposed he will lose his eyesight.

A MAN named Barney, living in San Francisco, who had for some time been under the baleful influence of what is called spiritualism, recently committed suicide in the most shocking manner, after having written a note to the effect that he was going on a journey into the spirit-world, but should not be long gone.

A LATE number of the London Times has a powerful article on the recent Burdell murder in this city, in which the doings of the coroner, witnesses, doctors, reporters, and newspapers are all analyzed, and lashed with the most unsparing severity.

IT is estimated that the whole amount of gold yielded by the mines of California and Australia is one hundred and forty-seven millions of dollars. If this sum were coined into $20 pieces, it would make a column of double eagles nearly fifteen miles high.

IT is asserted by those who profess to know all about such matters, that the construction of the ocean telegraph will increase stock-gambling in this country at least tenfold.

IN some townships in Iowa land is now worth $300 an acre, which was bought five years ago at the Government price, namely, $1,25 an acre.

THE expense of building and equipping one first-class man-of-war, is greater than that of maintaining all the colleges in the Union for ten years.

DURING the month of February no less than ten persons were confined in San Francisco on account of insanity.

A COUPLE of brothers, named Hendrickson, recently killed a black bear, in the woods of northern Vermont, that weighed 316 lbs., when dressed.

WIT AND HUMOR.

STATE'S EVIDENCE.—A notorious thief was once arraigned for horse-stealing, who was supposed to be connected with an extensive gang, which were laying contributions on all the stables round about. Many inducements were held out to him to reveal the names of his associates, but he maintained a dogged silence. An assurance from the court was at last obtained, that he should be discharged, upon his revealing, under oath, all he knew of his accomplices. The jury were accordingly suffered to bring in a verdict of "Not guilty," when he was called upon for the promised revelation. "I shall be faithful to my word," said he; "understand, then, *the devil is the only accomplice I ever had*; we have been a great while in partnership—you have acquitted *me*, and now you may hang *him*—if you can catch him!"

THERE is a well-known custom prevailing in our criminal courts, of assigning counsel to such prisoners as have no one to defend them. On one occasion, in the Western part of this State, the court finding a man accused of theft, and without counsel, said to a lawyer who was present, "Mr. ———, please to withdraw with the prisoner, confer with him, and then give him such counsel as may be best for his interest." The lawyer and his client then withdrew; and in fifteen or twenty minutes the lawyer returned into court alone. "Where is the prisoner?" asked the court. "He has gone, your honor," said the hopeful legal "limb." "Your honor told me to give him the best advice I could for his interest, and, as he said he was guilty, I thought the best counsel I could offer him was to 'cut' and run; which he took at once."

QUITE ANOTHER PAIR OF SHOES.—A shoe-dealer in this city informs the public, through the medium of an enormous placard over his door, that he has "20,000 pair of shoes for the million." It is evident that nine hundred and eighty thousand of his customers must go without shoes to their feet, for if he supplies the million out of his stock of 20,000, Colburn will tell him there must be the deficiency to which we have alluded.

TRUTH IN WINE.—A gentleman boasted that he had drunk two, three, or four bottles of wine every day for fifty years, and that he was as hale and harty as ever. "Pray," remarked a bystander, "*where are your boon companions?*" "Ah," he quickly replied, "that's another affair; if the truth may be told, *I have buried three entire generations of them.*"

"I WANT to go to Albany and back to see my grand-son," said a respectable-looking but simple-hearted old lady, to the ticket-seller of the Hudson River Railroad. "We don't sell return tickets, madam," replied the clerk, with defferential politeness. "Don't sell *return* tickets!" exclaimed the old lady with surprise; "then I shan't go, for I would not like to go away from home forever!"

IN a company of young people, the other day, at a country tavern, a man was saying that the Italians had no "w" in their language. "How, then," demanded one of the company, with a mingled air of triumph and contempt, "do such chaps as them spell *wagon?*"

THERE is a rich man in this city, whom the Daguerrians have tried to get the likeness of, but failed, as he is *too stingy to leave his shadow.*

WONDERFUL INSTINCT.—A cat having lost her kittens followed a *mutton*-pie man

TO ALLEN.

BY ALICE CARY.

Once in the years now dead and gone—
In the stormy winter night—
We blew till our cheeks were red as fire
To make the damp wood light.

And when it kindled, and we could count
The rafters by its glow,
We sat on the hearth in earnest talk—
Three of us in a row.

Little Lucy with mouth so sweet,
And bright hair in her eyes,
Staring straight at our foolishness,
And thinking it was wise.

You, so sturdy of heart and limb,
Wishing the wind and hail
Might drive some ship ashore that lacked
A lad with her crew to sail;

And I, for the time of callamus
Wishing, and grape-vine swings,
And for lady-birds to come to us,
And show us their speckled wings.

Ah, soon enough it came about,
That gusts of wind and hail
Drifted a ship ashore that lacked
A lad with her crew to sail.

And fast enough the seasons came,
And made my wishes true,—
But a time like that when Lucy sat
On the hearth, betwixt us two,

I have not found, and cannot find,
As about the world I go:
For we never can sit and talk again—
Three of us in a row.

◆

THE ABDUCTED HEIRESS.

BY MRS. CAROLINE INGRAHAM.

AUTHOR OF "SARAH PERCIVAL; OR, THE BRIDE OF THE HOUSE OF GOLD," ETC. ETC.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER XIV.

PURSUIT.

It is but seldom that punishment follows close upon the commission of a crime or folly. But in this case it seemed to do so. As the carriage that bore Justina away from all who loved her, rolled onward, the weight of memory pressed deeper and deeper on her heart. She grew ill and restless, and a strange coldness toward Saville seemed springing up in her heart. At the moment when she supposed him to be leaving her forever, she felt that she could sacrifice everything, so that he might only remain near her. But now that the sacrifice was really made—now that she had leisure to think and reflect, in that long night journey, she saw, with dismay, that she could never love him as she had loved Alfred. She was bound in all honor, to become his wife, but the thought of a life spent only with him, while she could never look on Alfred's face again, was inexpressibly bitter to her.

She shrank into a corner of the carriage, wrapped herself in her cloak, and feigned sleep, in order to escape all conversation with her companion. He did not speak, but seemed engrossed by his own thoughts. Did he, also, regret the step he had taken? I cannot exactly call it regret, for he was not one to abandon a project once undertaken, but in his heart of hearts, he felt that it would have been better for both if they had never met. It was not the a passion of a lover that he looked upon her—but since fate seemed against him, he swore inwardly that he would baffle fate, and win what she withheld.

The gray dawn was just breaking when the sound of horses' feet, and the momentary pausing of their carriage, roused them from their abstraction.

"What does the scoundrel mean by stopping?" said Saville; and letting down the window, he looked out.

"What—Saville!" cried a voice in an accent of astonishment and pain.

"The devil! Drive on!" he cried to the postilion, and the horses sprang forward in a rapid trot, and left the speaker far behind.

"Who was it!" asked Justina.

"Colonel Sair, my love."

"Your friend—the colonel? What could have brought him here? Are we pursued?"

"Scarcely," said Saville, with a sarcastic smile. "When a man pursues another, he does not generally meet him from the other way."

Justina was silent.

He took her hand, and drawing the heavy cloak away looked long and earnestly in her face, by the light of the carriage lamp.

"How pale and sad you look, Justina."

"I am ill."

"Is it possible that you regret what you have done, so soon? Justina, it is not too late. If you but say the word, I will take you back at once. Heaven knows I will take no unwilling bride to the altar."

"No—no. I cannot go home again, except as your wife," she said sadly. "It would break my mother's heart."

"You seem to have no thought of mine," he said bitterly.

She smiled and kissed him.

"Forgive me, Eustace. If I had not loved you, I should not be here. But I am ill and wretched, and I hardly know what I am saying."

"You are indeed ill," he said, as he felt the hot breath that fanned his cheek. "I am not a monster, to urge you beyond your strength. We will stop at the next inn—it is but a mile or two from here—and you shall rest, before we go on."

"But do you not fear pursuit?"

"What traces have they of us, Justina?"

"You forget Colonel Sair."

He started and bit his lip.

"I did for a moment, little one. But never mind—you shall have rest, and I will guard it as tenderly as love can guard, though forty Sair's were clamoring at the door. You do not fear to trust me?"

"No, Saville," she said thoughtfully. "Whatever your faults may be, your honor is untarnished, and I shall sleep as sweetly as if I were in my mother's arms."

She leaned her head against his breast as she spoke, and tried to forget its aching throbs. He looked down at the pale and noble face with closed eyes, and was startled again by its faint resemblance to one he had loved in youth. And as he gazed, scene after scene of his early life rose up before him, the faults, the follies, the sins of that reckless time. He seemed to himself, like an evil spirit who had led an angel astray, and he could only hide his eyes with his hand, and sigh to think that she, so young, so beautiful, and so pure, should be doomed to link her fate with his.

"There was another," he murmured, and then remorse became so torturing, that the sudden pause of the carriage before the wayside inn, and the bustle around him, was a blessed relief.

It was late in the afternoon before Justina awoke from the long and deathlike sleep into which she had fallen, as soon as she reached her apartment in the little inn. She lay for a moment, wondering to what strange place she had been brought. The bed, the room, the furniture, all were unfamiliar. But a regular military tread in the passage beyond, soon recalled her to herself, and with a heavy sigh, she rose, smoothed her dark hair, and resumed the hat and shawl, that were lying on the table, just as she had flung them down.

She opened the door, and went out into the hall. Saville was pacing to and fro, with his arms folded, and his head bent down upon his breast, but on seeing her, he came eagerly forward, and taking both her hands in his, asked how she felt.

"Better—much better," she replied.

"And are you able to resume the journey?"

She looked at him for a moment, and bowed her head in assent.

"The carriage waits at the door, with fresh horses," he said. "But before you go, you must take some refreshments."

He took her hand to lead her to the parlor, but she drew back.

"Saville—do not ask me. I am refreshed already by my long sleep."

His face darkened.

"You know, Justina, that among the Arabs, no man will break bread, or partake of salt, with his enemy. Do you meditate treachery, that you refuse?"

"This is foolish, and childish," said the girl, drawing herself up with dignity. "I cannot eat—every morsel would choke me. But to show you I am no enemy, I will pledge you in a glass of wine."

He led her into the parlor, and poured out a glass for her. Strength and spirits seemed to return with the generous draught. She smiled with a touch of her old gaiety, as she put the goblet down.

COLONEL SAIR'S RECOGNITION OF GENERAL SAVILLE.

"And now—" he said inquiringly, as he caught her eye.

"Now I am ready. And as whatever is done, may as well be done quickly, we will make no delay."

Saville's face lit up as if by magic.

"There spoke my own brave girl—the soldier's wife. Come, let me hand you to the carriage."

They went out together. The landlord stood upon the steps, whistling "God save the King," and Saville, after seeing Justina safely seated, turned, with his foot upon the steps, and flung him a piece of gold.

"You remember," he said—"if any one follows us, we have taken another road."

The man scratched his head and looked puzzled.

"Well, what is it?" asked Saville impatiently.

"Your honor will have to hurry, for, unless I am much mistaken, they are following you now."

"What do you mean?"

"Step up here with me, sir, and look down into the valley."

He led him to a flight of ornamental steps, at the side of the house, and pointed down the road.

Far down as the eye could see, was a post-chaise, driven at its greatest speed, and rapidly nearing the inn.

"It is surely them!" said Saville, stamping impatiently. "What shall I do?"

"Do, sir? If I might offer my advice, sir," said the landlord, with a grin and a bow, "I should say, drive like Jehu in the opposite direction, and put the ring on the finger of the lady, before they can catch you."

The General smiled, and placed another piece of gold in his broad palm.

"At all events, give them no fresh horses, and keep them here as long as you can."

"I'll do it, sir. Luck go with you;" and the good landlord danced with delight as the carriage whirled along.

But alas! for the ill-assorted couple. The horses provided at the inn were young and fresh, and but imperfectly trained. Their speed began to increase as they descended the hill, till it became frightful. Saville let down the window, and turned pale at the prospect before them. The horses were running madly down a steep descent, that terminated abruptly on a level road, and the frightened postillion was clinging to the leader's neck, speechless and motionless. He sank back in his seat with a groan.

"Justina, my little delight, it is all over with us," he said sadly. "An almost certain death awaits us, but let us meet it bravely. Kiss me once more, and say you forgive me for bringing you to this."

"I forgive you?—Oh, Saville, I have nothing to forgive," said Justina, who was calm and pale.

"Then let us pray to God together. After all, it will take away the bitterness of death, to taste it thus with you."

He clasped her closely to his breast, and bowed his head upon hers. In silence they awaited the end. It came.

With a terrific crash, the carriage swung from one side to the other, as the bottom of the hill was reached, and then fell heavily beside the road. The frightened horses sprang away, with the postillion still clinging to the leader's back. Another carriage came dashing up in a few moments, and Colonel Sair and Mrs. De Courcey sprang out among the crowd that quickly collected. Justina, and her lover were lying side by side, as pale and motionless as if they had been dead.

They bore them back to the inn they had so recently quitted, and laid Justina upon the bed she had occupied before, while Saville's apartment was in the upper story. The horses, exhausted at last, by the headlong speed at which they had gone, were subdued, and brought back in triumph by the postillion, who was exalted to the dignity of a hero among his own associates, on account of his connection with the accident, and did not "bear his blushing honors" any too meekly.

Two physicians were summoned, and exercised their skill so effectually, that in a little while both patients were again in full possession of their senses, though bruised and shaken by the fall. And while the worthy disciples of Galen discussed the cases over a bottle of wine in the parlor of the inn, and Mrs. De Courcey lingered by the bedside of her sleeping child, Colonel Sair made his way to his friend's room, determined to give him a sound lecture for the folly of which he had been guilty.

He found him lying quietly in bed, as the physician had left him, out with an angry frown upon his brow. His face lit up as his friend entered the room, and he stretched out his hand eagerly.

"You here, George? This is too kind, my dear old fellow. I shall never forget it."

"Pshaw," said the Colonel, testily. "You need not go into the heroics over that. I only came down to save a good and innocent girl from doing something I knew she would regret to the longest day she lived!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said the General icily. "I was foolish enough to attribute your presence to some remains of that old friendship we formed in India, when we were both younger and better men than we are now."

"Don't be absurd, Eustace," said the Colonel, whose kind heart yearned towards his friend, in spite of his faults. "You know I love you. But seriously though, you have made a bad business of it, this time, my boy."

"How is she now, George?"

"Justina?"

"Yes."

"Sound asleep, and likely to do well—thanks be to God! But if any one came near death it was you, just then."

"I know it," said Saville, in a subdued voice. "And I shall remember it while I live, and feel grateful to Him who saved me."

"Prove your gratitude, Eustace."

"How?"

"By doing a good, and noble, and manly act."

"Name it."

"Give up Justina, at once and forever."

"Because I *must*?" asked Saville, looking steadily at him.

"No, Eustace," he answered, "but because you *will*. I honestly believe that if you were to see this young girl, you could persuade her to fly with you once more. But because you are a man of honor, I believe you will not do it."

Saville looked at him with a melancholy smile.

"You are right, George. From this moment, however favorable an opportunity may occur to win Justina back again, I will not embrace it. From this moment she shall be no more to me than a sister or daughter, and I will treat her as such. There is the hand of a penitent man upon it, George."

The stalwart Colonel grasped the hand.

"God bless you, old fellow. I knew your heart was in the right place—I—I—knew——"

And failing to tell what he knew, the gallant fellow sobbed like a boy. This undisguised show of emotion was not without its effect. The heart of Saville was drawn closer to him from that moment.

"Tears—and for me?" he said, half-playfully, and half-sadly. "Why, George, I am not worthy of them."

A low knock came at the door.

"Who is there?" he asked impatiently.

"One who must speak and be heard," was the unexpected reply in a female voice. The colonel rose, and dashing the tears from his eyes, opened the door, and a tall, majestic woman, clad in the deepest mourning, entered the room. Advancing to the wondering Saville, she threw back the heavy veil she wore, and disclosed the wasted, but still beautiful features of Eveleen De Courcey.

He gazed at her a moment with a mingled expression of horror and amazement.

"Can I believe my own eyes?" he murmured. "Is it possible that I see you, Eveleen, once more?"

"I am Eveleen," she answered calmly—"Eveleen De Courcey."

"Justina's mother?"

"Her *adopted* mother."

Something in her look and manner startled him. He looked at the colonel, who obeyed the hint and turned to leave the room. But Eveleen waved her hand and motioned him to stay.

"It is best that you should hear what I have to say, sir, since you are a friend of his, and mine," she said quietly. "I wish you to know him as he is—for during all these years, you have been deceived. Oh, if I had known who I was sheltering under my roof, and who was stealing, like a serpent, into the heart of that innocent child, I might have saved her this suffering, and shame!" she added, clasping her hands and looking at Saville.

"You are about to disclose all, Eveleen?" he said, looking fixedly at her.

"All."

"Then spare yourself the trouble. I will tear away the mask, and show him what I am. George, my real name is not Eustace Saville—but Justus Erringcourt—a native of this country, and a most wretched man. I fought a duel, some thirteen years ago, here, in London, and killed my man. I was obliged to flee, and sickening of the old life and all belonging to it, I took another name. Money purchased me a commission in the army; and in India, as you well know, my promotion was rapid. I have tried my best never to disgrace the last name I bore. But if you choose to expose me now, at this late day, and tell those who have failed to recognize me, that here lies Justus Erringcourt, the fugitive from justice, do so—and then leave me alone to die!"

"Nay—I'll do no such thing," said the brave colonel. "What have I to do with Erringcourt? I never knew him. But Eustace Saville I have known and loved from the day we first fought in the trenches side by side, and may I be shot for a deserter if I ever betray or forsake him!"

It was a brown and heavy hand that grasped the slighter one of Saville—but it was a kind and honest one, and as, in the warmth of gratitude, he carried it to his lips, a hot tear fell upon it.

"Since you know the worst, my boy, I can brave everything. Eveleen," he added, turning to her, "you see there is yet such a thing as true friendship in the world. Let the name of Erringcourt die away and be forgotten—I have another, which has never been disgraced."

"But your child—what name will you give to her?" was the calm reply.

Saville sprang up on his pillow as he heard the words.

"Have I a living child, Eveleen?"

"The child of Rose Carroll—Rose Erringcourt, I should say—since she was your lawful wife——"

"Yes—yes—she was. But the child?"

"Your child is still living. After the death of Rose, her daughter——"

"It was a daughter, then?"

"Yes. Your daughter was adopted by a New England farmer and his wife. She was like a child to them, till I, in my journey through the States, found her there."

"You!"

"I. I knew at once whose child she must be. I adopted her for my own. I said to myself that some day you would meet her, and through her I would wring your heart, even as you had wrung mine. Years went by—she grew up to be beautiful and accomplished. Then I took her to London."

"Oh, my God! Say no more!"

"I must. Some evil chance threw you in her way. The poor child was attracted toward you, without understanding the nature of the feeling you had awakened. You both deceived yourselves. You never loved her as you once loved her mother, Saville."

"Thank Heaven! I have been spared that crime!" said Saville, shuddering. "My child! my child! I must have been blind indeed, that I never saw her mother's face in hers. Oh, Rose—Rose—you have been terribly avenged!"

"I heard your name spoken," resumed Mrs. De Courcey, "but I little knew who bore it. And till the night of the fire, no one had ever dreamed that there was a secret understanding between you. Even when it was discovered, we trusted to time and change of scene to wean Justina from her fancy. We little thought to see you here, Erringcourt."

"Spare me—spare me!" he murmured.

"Nay—I will not reproach you now. It was only this morning that we found you had fled. And now, Justus—now that you know all, what is to be done?"

"Done!" said Saville, impetuously. "What can be done but to tell my child all, and let this folly be forgotten."

"But if she loves you——"

"Hush, Eveleen. She never loved me. There was only one woman magnanimous enough to do that, and her reward was the early grave where she is lying."

Mrs. De Courcey cast down her eyes, and he saw a faint blush steal over her face. A dream of youth came back again as he looked.

"Eveleen," he said, in a low voice, "can you ever forgive me for my treachery?"

"It was forgiven and forgotten long ago," she answered, with a slight sigh, freeing her hand from the clasp of his, as she rose to go. "I shall then tell Justina all."

"Yes."

"Good-bye, then, for a short time."

"Good-bye, Eveleen."

He eyed her moodily as she went out, and turned to Colonel Sair, who still sat beside the bed.

"George, did you ever throw away a jewel, and afterwards look and long for it in vain?"

"No," answered the straightforward colonel. "I never had any jewels to throw away."

"Lucky man! I have. You will stay beside me, if I go to sleep?"

"Certainly."

He turned his face to the wall, and fell into an uneasy slumber, while the colonel rocked softly to and fro beside him, swallowed, as best he might, his astonishment at what he had heard.

CHAPTER XV.

RECONCILIATION.

Let us pass over that strange meeting between the repentant father and his child. There was sorrow and humiliation in it, but there was also affection and remembrance, and the name of the dead wife and mother was breathed, as if it had been a prayer, by the man who had so bitterly wronged her, and the child she loved.

On a sunny summer's afternoon, nearly a week after the events of which I have written, two carriages drew up before the gates of Penryth. From one, the well-known face of Mrs. De Courcey was looking, while Justina reclined on the cushions by her side, with her heart beating fast at the thought of the meeting so soon to take place between herself and Alfred. In the other carriage followed General Saville and Colonel Sair.

Mrs. De Courcey was no longer weak and ill. The presence of her early love, it may be, imparted that delicate color to a cheek that had long been pale. Certain it is, that Justina often laughingly called her her beautiful mother, and feigned alarm lest there would be no more hearts for the maiden to win, when once the matron came in sight. Certain it is, also, that, at any such allusion, the soft and beautiful eyes of Saville sought her face, and a grave and tender smile brightened his own. But the widow never returned the glance—never smiled on him, or gave him the opportunity he seemed to seek, of conversing with her alone.

Was it because she had ceased to love him, and shrank back with horror at his approach? Or, was it rather that she distrusted her own heart, and dared not listen while he spoke of other days, lest she should relent, and love him still? Saville asked himself this question, as he watched her, a thousand times a day; and always—so cold and guarded was she—with the same unsatisfying result.

The travellers did not come unexpected. Letters had been exchanged between Mrs. De Courcey and her friend every day, and as the carriages stopped before the door, Mrs. Ernstein herself stood within the hall to welcome them. But no servants were visible, and as Justina, with a sinking heart, gazed out of the window for Alfred, she was greatly relieved by finding he was absent. The delicacy of his conduct touched her, and a sense of her own base ingratitude smote her to the heart.

"But I will make amends to him in future, if he can only forgive me now," was her mental resolution, as she descended from the carriage, leaning on her mother's arm, and followed by her father and Colonel Sair.

Mrs. Ernstein came a step forward to meet them, and embraced them both affectionately.

"My dear Eveleen, how very well you are looking. You are growing young and handsome as when you were a girl," she said, playfully. "And you, Justina—" unconsciously her voice assumed a lower tone—"words cannot express my gratitude in seeing you back once more."

"I have come back, never to wander away again," said Justina, with deep feeling. "But here is one whom you must greet under his new name—my father, Mrs. Ernstein."

The two shook hands in silence, while Justina looked on in pride and pleasure.

Mrs. Ernstein turned to greet the gallant colonel, and then all adjourned to their dressing-rooms.

Justina and her mother were among the first to descend to the drawing-room. They found the colonel standing before a portrait of Mrs. Ernstein, so deeply absorbed in its contemplation that he was not aware of their presence till he heard Justina's light laugh. Then he started and turned round, and seeing who it was, colored to the roots of his hair, and bowed.

"I was trying to make out the artist's name in the right hand corner of that portrait," he said hurriedly.

"Oh, Colonel—that will never pass," said Justina gaily. "The portrait hangs too high for that. Come now, be brave, and own that you were admiring it—but that you admire the original a great deal more."

"It is a fact, Miss Justina," said the honest colonel, with rather a sheepish look. "But I cannot guess how you came to discover it."

"It is easily seen, Colonel—I discovered it the first day I met you."

"Justina, my love—don't be rude," interposed Mrs. De Courcey.

"Oh, mamma, I am sure the colonel will not mind my nonsense. The more especially as I'm going to quote a very old saying for his benefit."

"And what may that be?" asked the Colonel.

"This—'Faint heart never won fair lady.' I dare say you have often heard it before."

"Miss Justina, you ought not to laugh at me. Consider my years."

"And honorable scars," returned the girl, playfully. But suddenly a voice in another part of the room, struck upon her ear, and turning pale and faint, she leaned against a chair for support, and was silent.

"It is only Alfred, my dear," said her mother in a low voice.

"I know it, mother."

"Look at him, then. Why are you so terrified? Remember, you have committed no crime."

"Mother, the motive was the same," said the girl sadly. "If a Divine Providence guided me aright, I surely did not know it at the time, and was willing to go wrong. I cannot look at him, mother. But tell me, how is he looking now?"

"Better—much better than when you went away, my child. The happy news has done him good, I see, and he is getting back both flesh and color. He is looking at you now, Justina—look up, and meet that smile."

"I cannot—I cannot!"

"Don't be foolish, my dear, Miss Justina," said the colonel, whose sympathies were all enlisted by the sorrow and contrition which had so suddenly changed her from a laughing Hebe into a snow-white Niobe. "Look at him now. He is standing before your father, with that same kind smile—and there—by the powers! he has done it, and they are shaking hands! Hurrah!"

The colonel performed an impromptu waltz with a clumsy oaken chair, in his delight, and Justina timidly raised her eyes, and saw her father and her lover approaching.

Saville took her hand in his, and pressed it encouragingly.

"I robbed you of her, when I little dreamed that she was mine by right," he said to Alfred. "And now as the only reparation I can make, I give her to you—with a father's blessing."

"Justina," said Alfred, while a sudden tremble in his voice told how difficult it was to control his feelings, "you hear what your father has said. Have I lost the place in your heart I once held?"

She looked at him now with a sad smile.

"I know now that you have always held it, even though, for a while, I mistook the nature of the tie that bound me to my father, and thought he had taken it. But—can you ever forgive me, dear Alfred, for the sorrow I have caused you?"

"Forgive you, my darling? It is all as if it had never been, at this moment. I cannot dream that there is such a thing as sorrow in the world."

He came nearer, and regardless of those around them—of all, save the deep and fervent affection that had only been made stronger and purer, by the fiery trial through which they had passed, they were in each other's arms.

"I have atoned for my misdeeds, I think, in that direction," said General Saville, as the lovers walked away to meet Mrs. Ernstein, who had just entered. "But with you, Eveleen."

He paused, and looked in her downcast face, while the colonel discreetly retired.

"Well—with me," said Mrs. De Courcey, fixing her eyes composedly upon him.

"Don't look at me so, for the sake of old times, Eveleen. Give me one of the dear old smiles."

"The old smiles have gone forever with the old days, I am afraid," she said irresolutely.

He saw her hesitation and went on.

"We will bring new ones in their stead. Listen to me, dear Eveleen. Thirteen years ago I wooed you, but I never loved you then, as I love you now. The follies of youth have passed away, and I am a wiser and a better man. Eveleen, I come to you once more, and ask you for the love you gave me then. Will you refuse it?"

"You wronged and deceived me," she said, passionately. "You embittered my life, Justus."

"Forgive me, Eveleen, and you shall see how eagerly I will strive to make you happy now. Will you not be mine, dear Eveleen?"

She looked at him earnestly. But when she saw tears gathering in those fine, dark eyes, her pride was melted, and she laid her hand in his once more, as she had done thirteen years before.

He kissed it reverently and tenderly, and led her towards the group at the other end of the room.

"Justina, my child, you have this day given me a son," he said with a smile. "I bring you a mother."

The girl lookod up wonderingly.

"Mamma—is it so? Will you, indeed, marry him?"

"Yes, my child."

"Oh, I am glad—I am glad." She threw her arms around her mother's neck, and then a general scene of congratulation ensued.

"Upon my word, in all this pairing off, I wish some one would take pity on me," said the colonel, looking askance at Mrs. Ernstein, who blushed and was silent.

Justina smiled archly.

"Remember what I told you colonel, about the old proverb."

"May I be shot if I don't!" was the sudden reply, and turning to Mrs. Ernstein, he added—

"Madam—some time since I did myself the honor of addressing a letter to you upon an important subject."

She bowed, and looked uneasy.

"That letter contained an offer of my heart and hand, and was received by you before you left London"

There was a general movement of surprise at this announcement.

"I have received no answer. Will you give me one now? Sudden wooings seem to be the order of the day, and you must pardon mine. I love you, and think I can make you happy. I am a blunt, rough soldier, and cannot woo you as another man might—but I love you—upon my soul, I do. Will you be my wife?"

"Say yes—dear Mrs. Ernstein," cried Justina, on whom the rough, but honest eloquence of the colonel, had made a deep impression.

Mrs. Ernstein blushed and looked first at the smiling group around her, and then at the noble looking man who awaited her reply so eagerly.

"Here is my hand, Colonel—and the heart with it," she said at last, with a smile.

He kissed it rapturously.

"Was ever so short and sweet a wooing?" he exclaimed as he turned toward the delighted spectators. "Saville—give me your hand; I never was so happy in my life."

"Dinner waits," said the grave servant at the door.

It was not very romantic, I know, but the six friends went down to the table in the highest state of happiness and good humor.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT]

* * *

A PERSIAN FABLE.

A traveller passing through a thicket, and seeing a few sparks of a fire, which some passengers had kindled as they went that way before, made up to it. On a sudden the sparks caught hold of a bush in the midst of which lay an adder, and set it in flames. The adder entreated the traveller's assistance, who tying a bag to the end of a staff, reached it, and drew him out: he then bid him go where he pleased, but never more be hurtful to men, since he owed his life to a man's compassion. The adder, however, prepared to sting him, and when he expostulated how unjust it was to retaliate good with evil, "I shall do no more," said the adder, "than what you men practice every day, whose custom it is to requite benefits with ingratitude. If you cannot deny this truth, let us refer it to the first we meet." The man consented, and seeing a tree, put the question to it, in what manner a good turn was to be recompensed? "If you mean according to the usage of men," replied the tree, "by its contrary: I have been standing here these hundred years to protect them from the scorching sun, and in requital they have cut down my branches, and are going to saw my body into planks." Upon this, the adder insulting the man, he appealed to a second evidence, which was granted, and immediately they met a cow. The same demand was made, and much the same answer given, that among men it was certainly so. "I know it," said the cow, "by woful experience; for I have served a man this long time with milk, butter, and cheese, and brought him besides a calf every year; but now I am old, he turns me into this pasture with design to sell me to a butcher, who will shortly make an end of me." The traveller upon this seemed confounded, but desired of courtesy, one trial more, to be finally judged by the next beast they should meet. This happened to be the fox, who upon hearing the story in all its circumstances, could not be persuaded it was possible for the adder to enter in so narrow a bag. The adder to convince him, went in again; when the fox told the man he had now his enemy in his power, and with that he fastened the bag, and crushed him to pieces.

THE COQUETTE.

A STORY OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.

BY AN OLD CONTRIBUTOR.

The magnificent ball and supper of Mrs. Linwood were over, and the last lingering guest had departed; yet, though silence reigned in the apartment, the brilliantly lighted saloon was not vacant. The tired servants waited to extinguish the lamps, which were even now growing dim in the faint approach of day-dawn; but they waited in vain.

Mute and motionless as a statue, Amy Selwyn, the beautiful niece of Mrs. Linwood, leaned against the open window, while fresh morning played among her silken ringlets, and lifted them from a brow whose sad and almost haggard expression contrasted strongly with the radiant happiness which shone in that sweet face one short hour before. Thought was busy with the past; and as memories of other days came thronging back upon the soul, she forgot the present. Again she was a happy child at her mother's knee, gathering for her the sweetest flowers of spring, or conning the daily task at her side, sure of that most precious reward, a fond kiss, or an approving glance from those eyes, so soon to be closed in death. Again she wandered with the companion of her childhood, the beloved cousin, whose sex and age made him her natural protector, and whom she had never ceased to love with sisterly affection, though circumstances had of late estranged them from each other. Another image was before her, too—one which was once associated with all her youthful dreams of hope and joy, and which even now brought the rich blood to her cheek, and caused her heart to throb so wildly, that she started, and looked about her, as though the object of her thoughts must indeed be standing at her side.

At that moment a young man, who, until then, had remained motionless as herself, gazing on her averted form, hastily crossed the room; and addressing the young lady, exclaimed, "So, Amy, you have sold yourself for wealth—you, who were once so child-like and simple in all your tastes and feelings. Is it indeed true, what was so complacently asserted in this circle to-night by that heartless woman, that you are about to marry Colonel Winterton, whom you have known only for one short month? Amy, tell me it is not so, or I shall learn to look with scorn and loathing on your sex."

"George, do not speak to me in that harsh way; you know I cannot bear it. It is so long since I have had any one to love or care for me, and I was so glad to see my once kind cousin back again."

As she spoke, the beautiful girl looked up with a timid and deprecating glance in the face of her companion; but she found there no answering glance of sympathy. His strongly-marked but handsome features were cold and stern in their expression; and he evidently shrank from the light hand laid tremblingly on his shoulder as he answered, "I would not deal harshly with any one, Amy, and least of all with you. I believe you will find me more truly your friend than many, who would flatter and persuade you that you can do nothing wrong; but I cannot and will not conceal from you that your treatment of my friend, Clinton Delamere, has destroyed for ever my esteem and confidence in your character. I know him to be, at this moment, a voluntary exile from his country—ill and almost heart-broken; and can I feel otherwise than indignant when I see you lavishing your smiles on another, to whom, if report speaks truth, you are about to give your hand at the altar? Amy, have you a heart to give?"

"I did not forsake Clinton Delamere," she said, while she vainly struggled to force back the tears which filled her eyes; "he chose to distrust—to forget me. Surely you would not have wished me to seek to win him back again?"

"And why did he distrust, and seek to forget you, Amy? Was it not because that spirit of coquetry, which is the bane of your existence, prompted you to seek for the admiration of every one around you—to traffic for compliments—to barter looks for words, and words for feelings; in short, to make your lover miserable for the gratification of your vanity? Yet you might, had you so chosen, have won him back, without the sacrifice of maidenly delicacy or dignity; nay, you might do so still. Good night."

He turned and left the room before the bewildered Amy could collect her thoughts sufficiently to answer. Mechanically she sought her own apartment; and throwing herself on a low seat, burst into a violent flood of tears. The last words of George Selwyn still sounded in her ears, and conscience told her they were just. Grief, resentment, tenderness, and pride strove alternately for the mastery; and in the wild chaos of her thoughts she was sensible only of one overwhelming feeling of wretchedness. "Oh, that I had died in my childhood!" was her passionate exclamation—"that I could die even now, for there is not one being on earth to love or pity me. Even George has become my enemy; and Clinton, dear Clinton! Heaven forgive and help me!—that love is sinful now."

The weary attendant who had been sitting up for her young mistress started up at the sound of her voice; and mistaking the cause of her grief, said kindly, "Don't fret so, Miss Amy. We must all leave home some time or other; and I'm sure Colonel Winterton——"

"Home!" impatiently exclaimed Miss Selwyn. "Why talk to me of home? I have no home—no friends to leave. Home! oh, where is the home of my childhood—where the kind bosom on which I used to pour out all my childish sorrows? Where is the father whose counsels would have guided me, whose love would have shielded me from every ill?"

"Dear Miss," said the astonished maid, "I am sure you have everything to make you happy; and as for your honored parents, why, it's in nature for parents to die before their children; and she was always such a delicate lady. So do dry your beautiful eyes, Miss, or sure when Colonel Winterton comes to-morrow, you'll not be fit to be seen."

Nothing restrains the outward expression of feeling like the consciousness of a total want of sympathy in those about us. Amy Selwyn ceased to weep, and began to undress, after which she dismissed her attendant; and burying her head in her hands, resigned herself to sad and bitter recollections.

Few would have recognized the pale and weeping form that knelt in agony that evening, in the bright and envied being who gave her hand to Colonel Winterton at the altar a few weeks after. Covered with pearls and blond, flushed with triumph and excitement, and radiant with smiles which came *not* from the heart, the youthful bride imprinted a light kiss on the foreheads of her beautiful bridesmaids; gracefully received the congratulations of the glittering circle around her; listened politely to the stiff and self-complacent parting speech of Mrs. Linwood, and descended the staircase, leaning on the arm of her happy bridegroom. Once and once only was her self-possession disturbed. At the foot of the stairs stood her cousin George, who, as she passed, took her hand and murmured—"God bless and preserve you, Amy." Involuntarily she wrung the hand she held; thoughts and memories "buried in the far, dark past," filled her soul, and hurrying by the crowd of domestics who had come forward for one parting word, she sank back in the carriage and gave full vent to her tears.

"Surely, my own Amy," said her husband, caressingly, "you have left nothing there for which my love cannot repay you?"

Conscious that she had no heart to give in return for this generous affection, Amy shrank from its expression, and a confused wish that she had never been born, or never met the man to whom she had just sworn eternal love and duty, was uppermost in her mind, as the horses bore her away to her new home.

By her marriage with Colonel Winterton, Amy had secured all she could desire of wealth and splendor, and she had gained besides what she had no right to expect, a high-minded and honorable friend, whose love might have made her happy. But surrounded by all these sources of earthly enjoyment, she was restless and miserable. The necessity of concealing what she did feel; the policy of affecting what she did not; the contempt excited by the cringing servility of those who flatter for an equivalent to be rendered; the repeated wreck of hopes that seemed reasonable; the betrayal of confidence; the feverish struggles, rivalry, mortification, and disappointment that beset her in the whirlpool of fashionable life; these are causes which the purest and noblest minds have found it hard to resist, and they had their full effect on a temperament like Amy's, naturally vain, ardent, and excitable, and warped by circumstances to something worse.

At an assembly in ——— Place, Mrs. Winterton was first introduced to Henry Fitzallan, who had just returned with his widowed mother from Italy, where he had been spending a year for the benefit of his health. He was the last of his race, all of whom had fallen before that wasting scourge, hereditary consumption. Genius and intellect were stamped on his lofty brow, and a world of passion lay concealed in the depths of those dark, spiritual eyes, which seemed to read the soul of those on whom they gazed. His devotion to his mother, who evidently lived but for him, touched the better feelings of Mrs. Winterton, and his abstraction and indifference to general society rendered him an object of special interest to her. Accustomed to make her own impulses the rule of her conduct, she treated the interesting strangers with such marked attention that it soon became a subject of conversation among the different coteries into which her dear five hundred friends were divided. Some blamed, some pitied, and some envied her, but not one was found faithful enough to warn her of danger, or to whisper one word of caution. Her husband had become—not openly jealous, he was too well bred and fashionable for that, but coldly polite and reserved at times, and contemptuously reproachful at others. Her cousin George was away, and besides him she had not one disinterested friend and adviser on earth.

In the meantime, young Fitzallan was becoming gradually absorbed by his interest in the beautiful being whose graceful attentions to his beloved mother had first awakened his gratitude, and then, as he saw her evidently unhappy, his sympathy and compassion. From these feelings the transition to love was easy, under the influence of a fascination which he had no power to resist, and from which he wanted moral courage to fly. That one so gifted, so worshipped, so beautiful, should devote her time, her talents, her attentions to him, was as singular as it was bewildering. His mornings were spent in her boudoir; his afternoons in riding by her side; and his evenings in wandering through the crowded assembly, restless, dissatisfied, and unhappy, until her arm was linked in his, then all besides was a void. His widowed mother was almost forgotten in the intoxication which had seized every power and faculty of his soul. Occasionally, indeed, when he saw her pale face and met her mild, but sorrowful glance, the memory of his cruel desertion stung him, and fondly kissing her cheek, he would murmur how gladly he could die to save her from vexation; but by degrees the delirium in which his senses were steeped, shut out every object but one. He saw not that the pale cheek became every day paler, that the sunken eye grew more dim, and that the devoted mother, to whom his love was the sunshine and charm of existence, was dying under the dreadful consciousness that her soul's idol had thrown away the wealth of his affections on an unworthy object, whom to love was guilt, dishonor, despair.

It was now the height of summer, and a large party of the gay and fashionable were congregated at Saratoga Springs, in search of pleasure, conquest, and health. Colonel Winterton and his beautiful wife were there; and there too in her train was Fitzallan, who had persuaded his mother, in spite of her remonstrances, to accompany him. He would not believe her to be so very feeble—the Springs would certainly revive her, and she would live many years to rejoice in the happiness of her son. The name of Amy Winterton was never mentioned between them, and he shunned every allusion to it so carefully that his mother could not venture to utter the warning which trembled on her lip. So, with a self-devotion that mothers only can understand, she listened in silence to his joyous anticipations, and prepared for her departure, with the firm conviction that she was going to a land of strangers to die. But it was something to have her beloved Henry all to herself once more, if only for a few brief days, and Mrs. Fitzallan was more cheerful during that short journey than she had been for many months preceding it.

"Amy," said George Selwyn, who had recently arrived at the Springs, one day to his cousin, "did you know that Clinton Delamere has returned, and will shortly be here with his *fiancee* and her family?" For one moment the burning blood rushed to the brow, cheek, and bosom of Mrs. Winterton, and then retreated, leaving her so deathly pale that George Selwyn thought her about to faint.

In a voice almost inarticulate, she said, "Do not, I entreat you, George, jest about this before my husband. *You*, surely, are my friend."

"You may depend on me, Amy," he answered, "but others may not be so discreet. Why, oh why will you thus place yourself in the power of a malignant world? Why will you alienate the affections of a generous and honorable man by your unworthy——"

"Say no more," she haughtily interrupted; "I will not bear censure and reproach from any one, not even from you, who profess to be my friend. I am not a child, to be lectured into propriety and good manners." Before he could reply she turned and was gone.

A few days after, Clinton Delamere suddenly entered the hall in which Amy was standing, carelessly conversing with a stranger. He saw her, hesitated a moment, then crossed the room and stood beside her. A few words he spoke in a clear, firm voice, but what they were she did not hear. It seemed to her excited imagination as if there were reproof and contempt in the very tones of his voice, and without raising her eyes, she uttered some inaudible sound in reply. When she ventured to look up, the stranger alone was at her side. Oppressed with the suddenness of the interview, overcome by previous agitation, and stung to the heart by the evident indifference of Clinton Delamere, she hastily excused herself, and taking refuge in her own apartment, burst into a flood of tears.

There was to be a splendid entertainment at ——— Hall that evening, and in spite of the wretchedness that had oppressed her through the day, Amy Winterton was there the cynosure of every eye, the observed of all observers. She was standing on the stone steps that led from the portico to the illuminated garden, when Fitzallan approached, and in evident agitation begged to speak but three words with her in private. Unconsciously she suffered him to draw her arm through his and lead her to a retired corner of the portico, where, in a few words, he told her of his love, his deep devotion, what he had just heard of her attachment to Clinton Delamere, of their parting, and of her agitation on meeting him the day previous, and ended with conjuring her either to confess her love for Delamere, or at once to fly with him to the ends of the earth. At that moment a messenger was heard calling his name, with the information that his mother, who was very ill, had sent for him, desiring him to come to her immely. He heard the words, but in his agitation took no note of their meaning, while he continued to press his suit, and to beg for one little word of reply. But another voice was in Amy's ear—another image filled her heart. As they stood in deep shadow, unseen by those walking in the garden, Clinton Delamere and a young lady passed so near them that their conversation was distinctly heard by Amy.

"Do not deceive me," he said to his companion. "I have once been cruelly deceived, and I frankly confess to you, that the disgust and loathing I feel toward the most profligate of her sex is weak compared with what I feel for the coquette, who with no temptation but a miserable vanity, trifles with the affections and happiness of——" the rest of the sentence was lost in the distance.

"He scorns me—he holds me up as an example—he—the only being I ever really loved!" thought Amy. She leaned against the portico too faint and wretched even for tears.

"Speak to me, answer me, beloved Amy," said her companion, taking her cold hand in his. She withdrew it with a shudder as she exclaimed,

"Well may he scorn me! Let me go, rash, infatuated man—you know not what you love! I know not what you have said, I have not heard you—I only know I am a wretch—a vain, miserable wretch. I have no love to bestow on any one, I have no heart—I am—oh, Heaven, forgive me!"

"Fitzallen!" exclaimed several voices in a tone of alarm and horror. The unhappy young man hastened toward the crowd, and there learned that the mother who would have laid down her life for him without a murmur, was dead! Dead without giving him her parting blessing, or receiving his last farewell.

"Madman! fool that I was!" he cried—"I have murdered her! But for my accursed folly she might now——" he cast one glance at the pale and horror-stricken Amy, who had followed in the crowd, and rushed from the room. She met that glance and fainted.

Many years have passed since that night, and few who were then present remember that scene of sudden horror. Fitzallan soon died abroad, and Amy Winterton retired from the gay circles in which her name had become a by-word, to hide her shame and remorse in obscurity. Her husband, who in different circumstances might have made a valuable and useful man, became a dissipated, fashionable gambler, but his wife never returned again to society, and her name is a forgotten sound even with those who knew her best. But Clinton Delamere, now a happy husband and father, remembers her still, and in the privacy of his delightful home often repeats her sad story to his children, while he fondly presses the silken curls of his little Lucy against the cheeks of her mother, and bids her guide and guard her well lest she too should be a Coquette.

* * *

LAUGH IF YOU ARE WISE.

In order to look into any person's temper, we generally make our first observation upon his laugh, whether he is easily moved, and what are the passages which throw him into that agreeable kind of convulsion. People are never so much unguarded, as when they are pleased; and laughter being a visible symptom of some inward satisfaction, it is then, if ever, we may believe the face. There is, perhaps, no better index to point us to the particularities of the mind than this, which is in itself one of the chief distinctions of our rationality. For, as Milton says—

> "——Smiles from reason flow, to brutes deny'd,
> And are of love the food ——"

It may be remarked in general under this head, that the laugh of men of wit is for the most part but a faint constrained kind of half-laugh, as such persons are never without some diffidence about them: but that of fools is the most honest, natural, open laugh in the world.

We may range the several kinds of laughers under the following heads:—The dimplers, the smilers, the laughers, the grinners, the horse-laughers.

The dimple is practised to give a grace to the features, and is frequently made a bait to entangle a gazing lover; this was called by the ancients the Chian laugh.

The smile is for the most part confined to the fair sex, and their male retinue. It expresses our satisfaction in a silent sort of approbation, does not too much disorder the features, and is practised by lovers of the most delicate address. This tender motion of the physiognomy the ancients called the Ionic laugh.

The laugh usually heard among us is the common Risus of the ancients.

The grin, by writers of antiquity, is called the Syncrusian; and was then, as it is at this time, made use of to display a beautiful set of teeth.

The horse-laugh, or the Sardonic, is made use of with great success in all kinds of disputation. The proficients in this kind, by a well-timed laugh, will baffle the most solid argument. This upon all occasions supplies the want of reason, is always received with great applause in public disputes, and that side the laugh joins with, is generally observed to gain the better of his antagonist.

* * *

A Sweet Laugh.—A woman has no natural grace more bewitching than a sweet laugh. How much we owe to that sweet laugh! It turns the prose of our life into poetry; it flings showers of sunshine over the darksome wood in which we are travelling; it touches with light even our sleep, which is more the image of death, but gemmed with dreams that are the shadows of immortality.

PROOFS OF A FUTURE STATE.

Let the most steadfast unbeliever open his eyes, and take a survey of the sensible world, and then say if there be not a connexion, and adjustment, and exact and constant order observable in all parts of it. Whatever be the cause, the thing itself is evident to all our faculties. Look into the animal system, the passions, senses, and locomotive powers; is not the like contrivance and propriety observable in these too? Are they not fitted to certain ends, and are they not by nature directed to proper objects?

Is it possible, then, that the smallest bodies should, by a management superior to the wit of man, be disposed in the most excellent manner agreeable to their respective natures; and yet the spirits or souls of men be neglected, or managed by such rules as fall short of man's understanding? Shall every other passion be rightly placed by nature, and shall that appetite of immortality natural to all mankind be alone misplaced, or designed to be frustrated? Shall the industrious application of the inferior animal powers in the meanest vocations be answered by the ends we propose, and shall not the generous efforts of a virtuous mind be rewarded? In a word, shall the corporal world be all order and harmony, the intellectual, discord and confusion? He who is bigot enough to believe these things, must bid adieu to that natural rule of "reasoning from analogy;" must run counter to that maxim of common sense, "that men ought to form their judgments of things unexperienced, from what they have experienced."

If anything looks like a recompense of calamitous virtue on this side the grave, it is either an assurance that thereby we obtain the favor and protection of heaven, and shall, whatever befalls us in this, in another life meet with a just return: or else that applause and reputation which is thought to attend virtuous actions. The former of these, our free-thinkers, out of their singular wisdom and benevolence to mankind, endeavor to erase from the minds of men. The latter can never be justly distributed in this life, where so many ill actions are reputable, and so many good actions disesteemed or misinterpreted; where subtle hypocrisy is placed in the most engaging light, and modest virtue lies concealed; where the heart and the soul are hid from the eyes of men, and the eyes of men are dimmed and vitiated. Plato's sense in relation to this point, is contained in his Gorgias, where he introduces Socrates speaking after this manner:

"It was in the reign of Saturn provided by a law, which the gods have since continued down to this time, that they who had lived virtuously and piously upon earth, should, after death, enjoy a life full of happiness, in certain islands appointed for the habitation of the blessed: but that such as have lived wickedly should go into the receptacle of damned souls, named Tartarus, there to suffer the punishments they deserved. But in all the reign of Saturn, and in the beginning of the reign of Jove, living judges were appointed, by whom each person was judged in his lifetime, in the same day on which he was to die. The consequence of which was, that they often passed wrong judgments. Pluto, therefore, who presided in Tartarus, and the guardians of the blessed islands, finding that, on the other side, many unfit persons were sent to their respective dominions, complained to Jove, who promised to redress the evil. He added, the reason of these unjust proceedings are that men are judged in the body. Hence many conceal the blemishes and imperfections of their minds by beauty, birth, and riches; not to mention, that at the time of trial there are crowds of witnesses to attest their having lived well. These things mislead the judges, who being themselves also of the number of the living, are surrounded each with his own body, as with a veil thrown over his mind. For the future, therefore, it is my intention that men do not come on their trial until after death, when they shall appear before the judge, disrobed of all their corporeal ornaments. The judge himself, too, shall be a pure, unveiled spirit, beholding the very soul, the naked soul of the party before him. With this view I have already constituted my sons, Minos and Rhadamanthus, judges, who are natives of Asia; and Æacus, a native of Europe. These, after death, shall hold their court in a certain meadow, from which there are two roads, leading the one to Tartarus, the other to the Islands of the blessed."

From this, as from numberless other passages of his writings, may be seen Plato's opinion of a future state. A thing therefore in regard to us so comfortable, in itself so just and excellent, a thing so agreeable to the analogy of nature, and so universally credited by all orders and ranks of men, of all nations and ages, what is it that should move a few men to reject? Surely there must be something of prejudice in the case.

* * *

GET WISDOM.

Learning, by which we mean all useful knowledge, whether speculative or practical, is, in popular and mixt governments, the natural source of wealth and honor. If, in English history even, we look into most of the reigns from the conquest, we shall find that the favorites of each reign have been those who have raised themselves. The greatest men are generally the growth of that particular age in which they flourish. A superior capacity for business, and a more extensive knowledge, are the steps by which a new man often mounts to favor, and outshines the rest of his contemporaries. But when men are actually born to titles, it is almost impossible that they should fail of receiving an additional greatness, if they take care to qualify themselves for it.

The story of Solomon's choice does not only instruct us in that part of history, but furnishes out a very fine moral to us, namely, that he who applies his heart to wisdom, does at the same time take the most proper method for gaining long life, riches, and reputation, which are very often not only the rewards, but the effects of wisdom.

* * *

THE REASON WHY.

To one who regards things with a philosophical eye, and has a soul capable of being delighted with the sense that truth and knowledge prevail among men, it must be a grateful reflection to think that the sublimest truths, which, among the heathens, only here and there one of brighter parts and more leisure than ordinary could attain to, are now grown familiar to the meanest inhabitants of Christian nations.

Whence came this surprising change, that regions formerly inhabited by ignorant and savage people should now outshine ancient Greece, and the other eastern countries so renowned of old, in the most elevated notions of theology and morality? Is it the effect of our own parts and industry? Have our common mechanics more refined understandings than the ancient philosophers? It is owing to the God of truth, who came down from heaven, and condescended to be himself our teacher. It is as we are Christians, that we profess more excellent and divine truths than the rest of mankind.

MY BIRTHDAY.

BY TAMAR ANNE KERMODE.

My Birthday!—Time, how stealthy is thy tread,
How swiftly hast thou marked on Memory's pages
A record of the year forever fled,
With all its hopes, and fears, and many changes.

My Birthday!—unconsciously the fond words spoken,
And kindly hopes and wishes fall upon my ear;
Friends gaily offer many a gift and token,
And strive in vain my drooping heart to cheer.

My Birthday!—I miss the clasp of one dear, loving hand,
Tearfully, I gaze upon a vacant chair;
Wrapped in the gloom of Death's dark shadowy land,
The dear one lies; the loss—how hard it is to bear!

My Birthday!—like a long half-forgotten dream the Past
Appears—its sunshine marred with many a storm;
The Future with clouds may not be overcast,
Deceitful hope still looks for a brighter morn.

Baltimore, March, 1857.

THE COUSINS.

A LEGEND OF FIFTY YEARS AGO.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

CHAPTER I.

At an old house in the country, where I am acquainted, lives an ancient lady—one of the good old grandmothers, with spectacles, and silvery hair, who delight in knitting stockings, spinning at a little foot-wheel, and telling long stories to the brood of grandchildren that cluster around them. She is a genial, talkative old lady, with a pleasant smile, and a wrinkled face, full of good humor and good feeling. Guileless and simple as a child, she fully believes the wondrous legends she relates—and to me, this is their greatest charm. There are no children in the house—they have all grown up and married, and gone away. But I supply their place, and often sit and listen to her stories, as the night comes on, till a shudder steals over me, and I seem to feel the presence of invisible spirits in the room. The old lady smiles triumphantly when I light my bed-room candle, and mutter something about leaving the door open between the rooms for the sake of warmth. The implied dislike of solitude, is a compliment to her powers of story-telling. Let me relate one of those tales—substituting my language in the place of hers, but still keeping the thread of the story distinct. I will call it, as she did—"The Two Cousins." And reader—

> "I vouch not for the truth, d'ye see,
> But tell the tale as 'twas told to me!"

Almost a hundred years ago, and long before the forests of New Hampshire were cleared by the white man's axe, two families came over from England and settled in the southern part of the State. The brothers, James and Weston Carter, had married two fair English girls, and reared their domestic hearth here, in the heart of the wilderness, inpreference to remaining in their own country.

Time went on. Sharp axes and willing hands soon cleared a space around the two little cabins, and the young wives, Alice and Mary, went singing around their rude homes, putting the last touches to the simple rooms, before laying down upon their beds of sickness and pain.

On a dark and stormy night, when the wind howled among the forest trees, and bent their branches to the very ground, and the rain fell down in a steady, furious stream, a child was born in each of those small cabins. To Alice and James was given a son with deep dark eyes and coal-black hair—to Mary and Weston, a daughter, with eyes as blue and bright as the sky upon a pleasant summer's day—and soft curls of a sunny hue. They named them, respectively—Ralph and Marguerite.

There was great rejoicing in those honest hearts. And as the two fathers sat that night over their pipes, James looked up with a friendly glance, and exclaimed—

"Look here, brother. These children, born on the same day, and each so beautiful, yet so different—why should they not grow up together and marry when they are old enough? What say you? Let us betrothe them in their cradles, and bring them up for each other. So, when we grow old and die, they will not be left to the mercy of strangers; but your Marguerite will have a kind protector in my boy, and Ralph will find a friend and companion in the girl. What say you?"

Now, Weston Carter, was a dreamy, thoughtful man. The romance of the thing pleased him, aside from its practicability. He looked up with a pleased smile, and answered.

"With all my heart, James—there is my hand upon it!"

The two brothers shook hands, and considered the future destiny of the children settled. But how little they knew—oh, how little they knew.

The boy and girl grew up together. Ralph, even in his infancy, was a moody and sullen child; and Marguerite, with her sun-bright hair, and dazzling blue eyes, was like a spirit of evil sent to torment him. A strange and unconquerable aversion existed between the two. Sometimes, nay often, they played together in peace; but now and then the dark blood would break out, and the parents be called upon to interfere. James Carter only laughed at these childish squabbles, but Weston shook his head sadly.

"It will never do, James," he would say. "Never. You might as well bring fire and water together, as those two. Best leave them alone, I fancy."

Even he, with all his prophetic fears, could never see the end. And little did the gentle mothers guess it, as day after day, they tried to teach their children to be more loving towards each other.

The wilderness had been made to "blossom like the rose," while the children were wearing out their years in anger and indifference, and quite a village had grown up around the place where the humble log cabins stood. The cabins themselves had given place to handsome painted houses; and James and Weston Carter were reckoned among the richest farmers in the place. So that when the fair Marguerite had arrived at the age of sixteen, she found herself not only a beauty and a belle, but the acknowledged heiress of all those vast possessions.

Perhaps the knowledge of all this made the young girl proud. It is certain that she smiled scornfully at the rustic suitors that already tried to win her favor, and looked with increasing dislike upon her cousin Ralph, who had grown to be a tall, slender youth, with a dark, though handsome face, and black eyes, that shot a baleful fire from beneath their overhanging brows. He watched her constantly, and yet he loved her no better than when he was a child. But he looked upon her as, in some sort, his property, and frowned like a baffled fiend when he saw her take the arm of a young stranger, who sat one Sunday in her father's pew, and walk towards home.

He had many opportunities to frown before the summer wore away. Mordaunt Howard, the young stranger, was ever by her side. He had been sent, by his father, from the city of Boston, to practice the art of husbandry in order to benefit his failing health, but he seemed to prefer taking lessons in love from the beautiful Marguerite, and wandered over hill and valley with her, in search of flowers, when he should have been holding the plough, or dropping seeds in the furrow.

The neighbors smiled good naturedly, as they watched the lovers, and Mary, the mother of Marguerite, often confessed to her husband that she should greatly prefer the graceful city youth as a son-in-law, to the moody Ralph—but her husband only sighed and shook his head. And Ralph himself grew more sullen and violent-tempered every day—while Marguerite laughed at him mockingly when others stood in fear, and then turned to shed such a smile upon Mordaunt from her bright blue eyes, as made her baffled cousin ready to eat his own heart with rage.

So matters stood, when Marguerite set out from home one pleasant afternoon for the neighboring village. It was not many miles away, and she did not fear the woods that lay between. Was she not going to purchase a new blue dress—that favorite color of *his*, and which he had often said he knew would suit her fair complexion, and sun-bright tresses so well? And had he not promised to meet her on the edge of the forest, when she returned, and walk through the quiet groves with her by sunset? Marguerite kissed her mother fondly, and tripped away from the cottage with a light heart, and a cheerful song upon her lips. Mary Weston looked after her daughter with all a mother's pride, till the bend of the road hid her from her sight and the song she sung only came in fitful echoes to her ear. Then she drew back from the door, and wiped a suspicious moisture from her eyes.

"It is ill, watching a person out of sight," she said to herself as she went about her household duties. And smiled at the old-fashioned superstition, little dreaming how soon she should prove its truth.

That night Marguerite came singing towards her home, with the blue dress tied up in a bundle, together with some white muslin for aprons, and a silken kerchief, also blue as her eyes, which she was about to hem neatly and present to her young lover. She had nearly reached the place where Mordaunt was to wait for her, when the song died from her lip, and the sparkle from her eyes, as she looked up and saw her cousin Ralph standing before her.

"I must speak with you," he said gloomily.

"Come to my father's house, then," said the fearless girl. "This is not the place."

"And yet you can meet young Howard here," he said, with a fiendish smile.

"I only meet those I love," was the scornful reply. "And so I do not choose to stay with you, Cousin Ralph. Let me pass."

"Not so fast, my lady," he answered grimly. "Before you go, answer me one question. Do you love this Howard?"

She looked him in the face and smiled broadly.

"God knows I do."

"I am sorry," he answered mockingly. "I should very much prefer to have my wife love me—but it can't be helped."

"Cousin Ralph—I never will marry you!"

"It is too late in the day for you to say that, my fair cousin," was his sneering reply. "Our fathers settled that business for us, long ago. You will be my wife, Marguerite. But don't flatter yourself I take you because I love you. No—it is to sting that hound, Howard—to make him tremble and turn pale when I kiss you before him. I have no more love for you, fair cousin, than the wolf has for the lamb he kills—but you are very beautiful and I can see it—your form is so perfect, and I admire it—above all, he loves you, and to torment him, as well as to gratify myself, I must possess you. Come—name the day."

She eyed him with a contemptuous smile.

"You forget the age we live in, my dear cousin. This is not the time when you can win a woman whether she will or no. You have been born one or two hundred years too late, I am afraid."

"Never fear but that I shall find a way to bring you to my wishes. But it is strange, is it not"—he added sarcastically—"to woo a wife in this way, and marry her through pure revenge."

The girl drew herself up proudly.

"Cousin Ralph, will you be kind enough to step out of my way? It is growing late, and my mother expects me home."

"Which means, I suppose," said the boy, "that the fair-faced Howard is waiting there with her."

The girl blushed, and his black-eyes flashed fire.

"Ah, I see that I have guessed rightly. Let a few moments more pass by, and you will not be in such haste to meet him."

"What do you mean, Ralph?"

"I see no reason why I should wait to call you my wife before you are mine," he said with an evil smile. "What is marriage between you and me. No—I will not wait. You must be mine now, Marguerite, and then you will be glad enough to leave him and to cling to me."

His meaning was too plainly stamped upon his dark face and in the glance of his eye, as he drew nearer to her. Her whole face was suffused with crimson, as she drew back, and exclaimed—

"Ralph—what do you mean?"

"Let me make it plainer," he said, with a brutal laugh.

"You dare not."

"I like that. What is there that I dare not do?"

"Ralph—think of my father."

"What do I care for him? I fear neither man nor devil, Marguerite."

"Then in God I put my trust."

"God is not here with us," was the bold reply. "You had much better consent at once to be mine."

He came nearer. She drew herself up to her full height, and motioned him away, with the dignity of an insulted queen.

"I warn you not to touch me," she said calmly.

"You look handsomer than ever now, my dearest cousin," he said mockingly.

He threw his arms around her. With all her might she struck him in the face and threw him from her.

"Take that, coward!"

"Struck—and by a woman!"

"Aye—struck like a dog," she answered mockingly. "Do you wish to try it again?"

He uttered a fearful oath, and sprang upon her. There was a short, sharp struggle—a faint cry for help, as quickly stifled as uttered—then a bright blade gleamed in the air and descended again and again. Marguerite fell heavily upon the grass-grown path, and a dark pool of blood welled out from her side. But her bright blue-eyes opened for a moment ere she died. "We shall meet," she murmured, and then her head fell back, and all was over.

The murderer gazed aghast at his victim for a moment, and then fled away into the dark forest.

CHAPTER II.

That night, as Mordaunt Howard leaned against a tree, at the edge of the forest, waiting for his Marguerite, he saw her come slowly towards him, with the little bundle in her hand. He waited till she was just opposite him—(noting the while how graceful was her figure, and how fairy-like her step)—and then spoke to her:

"Well, pretty one, you are late. You should have been here half an hour ago."

She did not look up with the happy smile he had seen so often, nor did she speak. But she turned her face towards him, and he saw that it was very pale.

For a moment he stood silent, struck dumb with astonishment. She glided on before him—he followed.

"Marguerite—Marguerite—what does this mean? Are you angry with me?"

She did not answer. Nor did she turn towards him again, but hurried on, silently, toward her father's house. At first he thought he would not follow. But such a caprice was so strange a thing in her, that he longed for an explanation. So, after some slight pauses and deliberations, he hurried on behind her.

The sun had been down almost an hour, but a faint twilight still remained to show him every flitter of her dress, and every motion of her form. As they hurried on so silently, he felt a strange awe at his heart when he noticed that the leaves did not rustle beneath her feet. But then, with the fond fancy of a lover, he remembered how fragile and delicate was her form, and how light her step.

"It is no wonder," he said to himself, and hurried on.

A mimic lawn led up from the road to the cottage of Weston Carter. Marguerita flitted up this like a spirit; but when her eager lover had almost touched her, he stumbled and fell. He sprang up quickly, and looked around. No Marguerite was there. But in the cottage-door stood Mrs. Carter, laughing, good-naturedly, at his mishap.

"Laugh as you will," he said, as he came up to her; "but where has Marguerite fled to?"

"She went to the next village some hours ago. But I thought you were to meet her on her way home?"

"And so I did. But she would not speak, and hurried away from me. I was close beside her just now, and should have reached her if it had not been for that unlucky tumble."

"Why, Mordaunt, you must be dreaming," said Mrs. Carter, looking at him curiously. "When was she with you?"

"Here—just now."

"Here? Why, Mordaunt, I have been standing at the door ever since you turned the bend in the road, and I am very sure she was not with you then."

A sickening fear stole over the young man. He staggered into the house, and sat down in a chair weak and faint.

"Mrs. Carter, something is amiss with Marguerite," he gasped: "It was her spirit that I saw!"

The mother gave him one startled glance.

"Oh! Mordaunt, say nothing of this to her poor father, till we know the worst. Come—I will go with you in search of her. Perhaps we shall meet her soon, and hear her laugh at our folly."

He could not tell her they should never see her smile again; but in his heart he felt it. The young moon was just rising as they went up the road, arm in arm.

"Not eloping with my wife, are you, Mordaunt?" said a cheerful voice, and, looking round, they saw Weston Carter driving his oxen home. With that terrible fear upon her, Mary could not meet his eye. She shrank back as her companion answered, with forced gaiety:

"No—we will soon be back. We wouldn't think of leaving you behind, you know, if we eloped."

"It would be a new-fangled way, I fancy, to take the husband along," said the farmer with a hearty laugh, as he left them.

They hurried on in silence. The moon shone out more clearly as they entered the forest; and before they had gone two rods, Mordaunt uttered a loud cry, and threw himself before his companion.

"What is it?—oh! what is it?" she cried.

"Nothing—nothing!" he answered, trying to keep her back. "Go back—and I will look for her alone. Oh! for God's sake, go back! Don't look there!"

But his pallid face and streaming eyes told the terrible story too well. Without a word the mother sprang past him—gave one anguished look, and then, with a loud cry, fell senseless upon the body of her murdered child!

A little boy, driving his cows home through the fatal wood, was the first to carry the tidings to the village. With his assistance, Mordaunt bore the body of the poor mother home, and laid it down within the cottage. She never breathed nor spoke again. And the stricken father and husband leaned upon his brother's shoulder, and wept like a little child as he gazed upon her quiet face.

It was late at night when the body of Marguerite was brought home. Her friends and playmates crowded the house, and many who had called her proud and haughty, wept and sobbed to see her lying there. But among her most intimate friends and acquaintances the words began to be uttered:

"Who has done this? Who is the murderer? Let him be found, and suffer for his crime."

Suspicion pointed at once to Ralph Carter. No one else had ever been known to harbor an evil feeling toward Marguerite. No sooner was his name whispered by one in that house of death, than every voice echoed it. James Carter stood aghast as they crowded around him and demanded his boy.

"Is he not here?" he asked, fearfully.

"No."

The strong man trembled and turned pale.

"I have not seen him since morning," he said, feebly. "But, neighbors and friends, it cannot be that he has done this. Have pity——" His eyes fell upon the dead girl's face, and he could say no more.

In five minutes more a mob surrounded the house of James Carter, and one of the number knocked for admittance.

"What is it you wish?" said the timid Alice, glancing out at the crowd, and shrinking back from the sight.

"Give us your son, Ralph—the murderer of his cousin, Marguerite!" was the stern reply.

The poor mother uttered a faint shriek.

"My boy a murderer!—oh, it cannot be!"

"Give him up!" cried the crowd.

Just then the dark face of Ralph appeared at the window, beside his mother. The multitude raised a cry of rage, at which he turned pale. But his natural hardihood soon came to his aid, and he said, quietly:

"Mother—this is some mistake. I will go with them, and soon be back with you."

She threw her arms around his neck, and looked deep into his eyes, with a sickening fear.

"Ralph—Ralph—you did not do it?"

"Mother—if you fail me so soon—if you doubt me already—what will others do?" he said, gloomily.

"Forgive me, my dear, dear boy. I do not doubt you. My son could never be a murderer."

He kissed her with remorseful tenderness; and, leaping lightly from the window, stood among the throng. His brave bearing seemed to subdue them all; and it was more as a friend and companion than as a prisoner that he walked away with them.

At the door of Weston Carter's cottage Mordaunt Howard met them. His face was pale and haggard, and his brown eyes lit up like fire when they fell on Ralph's changing countenance. In his heart he felt convinced that his hand had done the deed, and he thirsted for revenge.

"There is an experiment I wish to try," he said, in a low voice, as he led them into the room where the dead bodies of the mother and daughter were lying. "I have heard it said that if the hand of the murderer should be placed upon the body of the victim, the closed wounds will open again, and blood will flow."

All present looked at each other and at the body of the murdered girl with fearful interest.

"Such an experiment can do no harm," said Mordaunt, in the same low, measured voice. "Ralph Carter, for no other purpose would I allow you to contamminate her with your touch—but now—give me your hand."

Ralph offered it, and then drew it back hastily. He was deadly pale, and kept his eyes turned steadfastly away from the two beds, and the broken hearted old man that sat beside them.

"Give me your hand!" said Mordaunt Howard, sternly. He grasped it firmly, and approaching the bedside, laid it upon the dagger thrust in Marguerite's breast.

A silence, like death was in the room. The red blood began to ooze, drop by drop, from the wound, and those who stood nearest the corpse, averred that a mocking smile passed over its face as Ralph shrank back, with a cry of horror.

"Confess at once," said the stern voice of Howard.

The wretched boy fell on his knees before him.

"I murdered her!" he faltered.

"My son! my son! Oh, my God, can it be that I have given life to a murderer?" cried James Carter, as he bowed his head in shame and agony, too deep for words.

Ralph cast a wistful glance upon him, and went on.

"I murdered her. She struck me, and I was too mad to think what I did. We never loved each other, but God knows I never meant to do this. Do with me as you see fit. The sooner I die the better, for I am a wretched man. But, for God's sake, break the news lightly to my poor mother."

Many sobbed as he finished speaking, but the stern face of Howard grew still sterner.

"He has confessed the crime," he said, to a constable who stood near by. "Take him away to prison, for we would be alone with our dead."

One by one, the crowd passed from the room. The constable went last, with Ralph beside him. As they crossed the threshold, his father rose, and tottered feebly after him. The door was closed, and the two watchers were alone with those they had loved so tenderly.

Then, and not till then, did the stern composure of the young man give way. He bent down and kissed the pale lips of his betrothed wife.

"Oh, Marguerite—my love—my darling!" he murmured, and sank down beside her, and wept bitterly.

The winds and rains of autumn were beating over the grave of Marguerite and her mother, when the people of the village gathered upon the little common to see Ralph Carter die. He had been tried and found gulity, and sentenced to be hung. On this wild and stormy day, he was to look his last on earth, and go to meet his victim on the judgment seat of God.

Foremost among the crowd, stood Mordaunt Howard, dressed in deep mourning. But the relatives of the condemned man were weeping at home, and waiting for the sentence to be executed, that they might claim the poor dishonored body, and see it burried before they left that part of the country forever. Ralph looked wistfully over the trees, towards his home, as he mounted the scaffold.

"Tell my poor uncle, that I ask his pardon. And give the love of a dying man to my poor father and mother."

His voice trembled as he said these last words. The sheriff placed the noose around his neck. He raised his eyes to heaven, but started back with a look of horror. Close beside him, stood Marguerite, with a mocking smile upon her face. "We have met again," she whispered. He groaned heavily, and the next moment a lifeless body dangled in the air. Mordaunt Howard turned away with a smile upon his lip. His Marguerite was avenged!

Fifty years have passed away, and those troubled hearts are all at rest, save one. Mordaunt Howard still lives—a melancholy and lonely man, of seventy. Ere long, the light will fade also from his eyes, and he will join his Marguerite in Heaven!

MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY.

We must learn, and be convinced, that there is something sublime and heroic in true meekness and humility, for they arise from a great, not a groveling idea of things; for as certainly as pride proceeds from a mean and narrow view of the little advantages about a man's self, so meekness is founded on the extended contemplation of the place we bear in the universe, and a just observation how little, how empty, how wavering, are our deepest resolves and counsels. And as, to a well-taught mind, when you have said a haughty and proud man, you have spoke a narrow conception, little spirit, and despicable carriage; so when you have said that a man is meek and humble, you have acquainted us that such a person has arrived at the hardest task in the world, in a universal observation round him, to be quick to see his own faults, and other men's virtues, and at the height of pardoning every man sooner than himself; you have also given us to understand, that to treat him kindly, sincerely, and respectfully is but a mere justice to him that is ready to do us the same offices. This temper of soul keeps us always awake to a just sense of things, teaches us that we are as well akin to worms as to angels; and as nothing is above these, so is nothing below those. It keeps our understanding tight about us, so that all things appear to us great or little, as they are in nature and the sight of Heaven, not as they are gilded or sullied by accident or fortune.

REASON OF CONJUGAL TROUBLES.

BY ONE WHO KNOWS.

After long experience in the world, and reflections upon mankind, I find one particular occasion of unhappy marriages, which, though very common, is not very much attended to. What I mean is this: Every man in the time of courtship, and in the first entrance of marriage, puts on a behavior like a holiday suit, which is to last no longer than until he is settled in the possession of his mistress. He resigns his inclinatiou and understanding to her humor and opinion. He neither loves nor hates, nor talks, nor thinks in contradiction to her. He is controlled by a nod, mortified by a frown, and transported by a smile. The poor young lady falls in love with this supple creature, and expects of him the same behaviour for life. In a little time she finds that he has a will of his own, that he pretends to dislike what she approves, and that instead of treating her like a goddess, he uses her like a woman. What still makes the misfortune worse, we find the most abject flatterers degenerate into the greatest tyrants. This naturally fills the spouse with sullenness and discontent, spleen and vapor.

I very much approve of my friend Tom Truelove in this particular. Tom made love to a woman of sense, and always treated her as such during the whole time of courtship. His natural temper and good breeding hindered him from doing any thing disagreeable, as his sincerity and frankness of behaviour made him converse with her, before marriage, in the same manner he intended to continue to do afterwards. Tom would often tell her, "Madam, you see what a sort of man I am. If you will take me with all my faults about me, I promise to mend rather than grow worse." I remember Tom was once hinting his dislike of some little trifle his mistress had said or done. Upon which she asked him, how he would talk to her after marriage, if he talked at this rate before? "No, madam," says Tom, "I mention this now because you are at your own disposal; were you at mine, I should be too generous to do it." In short, Tom succeeded, and has ever since been better than his word. The lady has been disappointed on the right side, and has found nothing more disagreeable in the husband than she discovered in the lover.

Let the young men, aye and the young women too, follow the example thus set them by my friend, and my word for it, they will find courtship more sensible, and matrimony more agreeable than do the majority of billing and cooing lovers, who are all sweetness before marriage, and all sourness after it.

A PAIR OF HEROES.

A German and a Portuguese, when Vienna was besieged by the Turks, having had frequent contests of rivalry, were preparing for a single duel, when on a sudden the walls were attacked by the enemy. Upon this, both German and Portuguese consented to sacrifice their private resentments to the public, and to see who could signalize himself most upon the common foe. Each of them did wonders in repelling the enemy from different parts of the wall. The German was at length engaged amidst a whole army of Turks, until his left arm, that held the shield, was unfortunately lopped off, and he himself so stunned with a blow he had received, that he fell down as dead. The Portuguese, seeing the condition of his rival, very generously flew to his succor, dispersed the multitude that were gathered about him, and fought over him as he lay upon the ground. In the meanwhile the German recovered from his trance, and rose up to the assistance of the Portuguese, who a little after had his right arm, which held his sword, cut off by the blow of a sabre. He would have lost his life at the same time by a spear which was aimed at his back, had not the German slain the person who was aiming at him. These two competitors for fame having received such mutual obligatious, now fought in conjunction, and as the one was only able to manage the sword, and the other a shield, made up but one warrior betwixt them. The Portuguese covered the German, while the German dealt destruction upon the enemy. At length, finding themselves faint with loss of blood, and resolving to perish nobly, they advanced to the most shattered part of the wall, and threw themselves down, with a huge fragment of it, upon the heads of the besiegers.

FAITH A BASIS FOR COURAGE.

Of all the professions of men, a soldier's chiefly, should put him upon religious vigilance. His duty exposes him to such hazards, that the evil which to men in other stations may seem far distant, to him is instant, and ever before his eyes. The consideration, that what men in a martial life purchase is gained with danger and labor, and must, perhaps, be parted with very speedily, is the cause of much licence and riot. As moreover it is necessary to keep up the spirits of those who are to encounter the most terrible dangers, offences of this nature meet with great indulgence. But there is a courage better founded than this animal fury. The secret assurance that all is right within, that if he falls in battle, he will the more speedily be crowned with true glory, will add strength to a warrior's arm, and intrepidity to his heart.

One of the most successful stratagems whereby Mahomet became formidable, was the assurance that impostor gave his votaries, that whoever was slain in battle should be immediately conveyed to that luxurious paradise his wanton fancy had invented. The ancient Druids taught a doctrine which had the same effect, though with this difference from Mahomet's, that the souls of the slain should transmigrate into other bodies, and in them be rewarded according to the degrees of their merit.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

Virtue, though in rags, will keep me warm.

A good conscience is to the soul what health is to the body; it preserves a constant ease and serenity within us, and more than countervails all the calamities and afflictions which can befall us. We know nothing so hard for a generous mind to get over as calumny and reproach, and cannot find any method of quieting the soul under them, besides this single one, of being conscious to ourselves that we do not deserve them.

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☞ (*See fourth page for an explanatory notice.*) ☜

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THE WIND FROM THE WOOD.

BY WILLIE E. PABOR.

With a wild swell it came to my study door,
And it entered within the room;
And it spake of a ship on a rocky shore,
And the snow-colored caps of the waves that bore
The ill-fated ones to their doom.

It conjured a view of that desolate hour
Of womanly fear, and man's alarm;
How the lamp blackly swung in the light-house tower,
And the sea rose up in its terrible power,
And no one to shield them from harm.

But I said to the wind that came from the wood,
Why tellest thou this unto me?
I—lost in the mazes of soul-solitude—
Care as much for the South Sea Islander's mood
As I do for such tales of the sea.

And then, in my heart I regretted the speech,
When the wind said, in answer to me,
A maiden lies cold on that desolate beach,
Who vainly for aid her white hands did outreach,—
And that maiden—she called upon thee!

Adown the white sands my thought sped, while the wind
Kept whispering still in my ear—
For bride-wreath ye now the sea-rushes may bind,
And down in sea-grottoes a palace may find,
With no one to harm you a-near.

No answer I made; I was faint with the weight
Of the words of the wind from the wood:
Love's embers were lost in the ashes of fate—
I yielded my hope at the shrine of "too late;"
But erect in my sorrow I stood.

And ever since then hath the world said of me
Light things, in its gossipping mood:
It knows not my heart is, and ever shall be,
On a pilgrimage down to the desolate sea—
Guided there by the wind from the wood.

◆

FOREST SKETCHES---NO. 18.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY COL. WALTER P. DUNLAP.

A NIGHT IN A SWAMP.

We had spent more time in Texas than we had at first intended; but we had no occasion for complaint. Our last meal was taken at Galveston, and a good one it was; and I am still glad it was so, for the last impression of a place is very apt to remain fixed in the mind. I love the sturdy young sister of our glorious Union; and that last evening spent upon her hospitable shore will never be effaced from my memory. Several of the leading citizens of the town joined us in our repast, and, altogether, we passed a season of social joy such as makes man think more kindly of earth, and also illumines a page in the book of life to which, in a dark hour, we can turn back for relief and hope.

We had feared that we should lose the company of Garl when we left Texas; but he had concluded to take a cruise for his own amusement, and if we were willing, he would remain with us until we left the valley of the Mississippi. Of course we availed ourselves of his offer at once; and we left Galveston with far less regret, since we did not leave him behind.

We reached New Orleans in safety, and having spent a few days there, we kept on up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Red River, into which latter stream we turned, having taken a boat bound for Natchitoches. This place we reached in due time, and, without stopping, we took passage for Shreveport.

Shreveport is between the Red River and Lake Caddo, and to the westward extends one of those wide, trackless regions of marsh, swamps, lagoons, and bayous, which are found in that section of country.

We had two objects in going there. Ben Gilroy had an uncle, on his wife's side, who resided there; and then we all had a desire to see that part of the State of Lousiana. Ben's uncle was named Abner Smith. He was a jolly old soul—full of fun, good humor, and sound sense, and with a heart as big as was his worthy nephew's. He welcomed us with a cordiality which at once convinced us of its genuineness, and made us feel perfectly at home ere we had been there half an hour.

"Mammy," too, was as glad to see us as was Uncle Abner. "Mammy" was the matronly name by which our good host called his wife; and we had not been in the house an hour ere we discovered that she was a "mammy" in truth—a mamma, a mother. She was a child of New England; her real name was Fanny; and a better woman—a more tidy and industrious housewife—a truer Christian partner and mother—or a more generous friend, I never met.

Ah, Mammy Smith, I never shall forget thee,—never shall I forget thy warm smile, thy cheering word, nor thy generous hospitality. Never shall I forget thy truth or thine honor; nor will the memory of thy festive board, with its load of good things, ever pass from me. I never will think of thee but with a blessing. Nor can thy genial presence come to me through the mists of the past without a quicker pulsation of the heart, and a sense of grateful emotion.

And good old Uncle Abner!—may his shadow never be less; and may God bless him with earth's choicest gifts, both temporal and spiritual, while he shall continue to dwell in this lower vale!

Uncle Abner's plantation was upon the eastern shore of the southern part of the Caddo Lake; but most of his land was so high that the heavy floods never flowed it. We reached the place in the forenoon, having spent the previous night at Shreveport village, which is the capital of Caddo parish, and distant some ten miles from our plantation.

After dinner, we took our rifles for a stroll. Uncle Abner led us off to the southward and westward, towards a wide bayou, where he said we should find plenty of game. As we descended from the upland, we entered a thick bottom timber of cotton-wood and pawpaw. Most of the afternoon was spent in surveying the shore of the great lake, and in popping away at birds, a large number of which we shot and bagged.

We had just started to return, when I saw a tall object moving among some reeds, in a piece of swamp close behind us. I cried out to my companions to hold on, and then I crept back. I had gone some four rods when I saw that the object of my search was a flamingo. You may believe I was startled. With all my wanderings this was the first flamingo I had ever seen alive. But I knew I was not mistaken. He stood all of six feet high, from the ground to the top of his head; his body was of a bright, fiery scarlet, with only a few jetty black feathers in the wings; his legs, near a yard long, not larger than my finger; while his neck, rearing aloft the head with his huge, stout bill, was curved most gracefully. I had not seen anything for a month that had fired me with such desire as did that strange, rare bird. How he came there I did not stop to ask; nor how he happened to be alone; though I afterwards came to the conclusion that he had been caught by some one and made his escape.

I levelled my rifle and fired, and the bird staggered. I did not aim at the head—I simply aimed at the body, trusting that if I hit him he would fall. As I saw him stagger I rushed forward; but not to seize my prey. As I came within half-a-dozen yards he uttered a loud, trumpet-like yell, and started off upon the run. His right wing was flapping loosely by his side. My shot had broken it. And that was not all. I was soon satisfied by his limping gait that the ball had entered his side.

Yet he ran swiftly; and I ran after him. He kept a sort of open path, though often I was obliged to dive through tangled masses of vines and wild wood in my pursuit. His course was not a straight one. He turned wherever the way seemed best—now over an open place—then along a narrow passage—next around some bog—then through a murky pool—but ever on—on—on.

Yet I followed. The sight of the superb scarlet plumage inspired me, and I was resolved not to lose him. Not only would he make a fine morsel for the table, but I wanted him "mounted." What an addition that regal form would make to my ornithological collection. I thought of nothing else—I cared for nothing else.

And yet I might have given up at length had not the flamingo begun to show signs of failing. His step grew more slow, and that lame side became more apparent. For some time he had been slackening his pace, else I could not have kept up with him, for he had led me through some devious ways. But I was sure of him now. He failed rapidly, and ever and anon he would stop and utter that wild, clarion cry.

Finally he stopped without turning his head—he reeled to and fro a few moments—and then fell forward, and rolled over upon his side. I hurried up and found him dead. My ball had broken the wing, and passed through the body without touching any intensely vital part. The body was not heavy, being no larger than that of a good-sized swan, so I shouldered it easily, and having balanced my rifle by the side of it, I turned back.

Aye—I turned back!

Where was the sun? It was just sinking to rest somewhere, I was sure, but where I could not tell. I was surrounded by a dense timber, made opaque by tangled vines and hanging moss; and the only bit of blue sky I could see was directly overhead. It had already grown gloomy ere the flamingo fell, but I had only supposed it to be the effect of the shutting out of the light by the deep wood. I strained my eyes in all directions, but I could no more tell in which direction the sun was hanging than I could tell the number of trees that surrounded me.

I turned!

Aye—and I turned again. Which way had I come? I found my tracks, and I followed them till they had led me to a wide tract of tall reeds. Here there were tracks in all directions—tracks where animals had run, and tracks where the storm had taken its path. I entered—and I passed through. I came out in a familiar place. I saw my own tracks in the mud. I followed them again, and they brought me to the edge of a swamp. I entered beneath the shadows of the tall cotton-wood, and pushed on. I was in a path—I knew it had been travelled before, for the rank grass was trodden. By and by the way took a bend to the left—I followed it. Then another to the right—I followed on. The path grew more narrow and difficult until it ended in a dense thicket—a seemingly solid mass—of interwoven vines and bushes. Yet I saw an aperture close upon the ground—a sort of hole like a sluice-way under a wall—through which a man could crawl upon his hands and knees.

I knelt down and entered the strange pass. I knew I had not come that way; but still it might lead to an open place beyond. I crawled on, and soon saw an opening ahead. I reached it, and once more stood erect. And where was I?

Upon the margin of a wide, dark bayou, the still, murky waters of which reached farther than my vision could penetrate. To the right—to the left—the deep-tangled wildwood grew to the water's edge. The sun had sunk to rest, and the heavens were growing dark. Eagerly I strained my eyes to see if there was not some kind of a path that would lead me on. But no! I must turn back. And what was this passage through which I had come? How came it there? It could not have been the work of nature, for it was surely a travelled way.

I was pondering in this manner, when I was startled by a motion in the water directly at my feet. I gazed down, and I saw a huge dark, shadowy form just arising to the surface. There was a break of the inky element close by the shore, and a rod further out I noticed a sweeping of some moving thing. In a moment more there was another shadow, like the first—and then another—as though some armless old stump had thrown its reflection upon the water. I saw it now. They were alligators!

And this was the track of the monster reptiles, through which I had come! Presently a huge, ugly head was raised above the surface close at my feet. I gave a yell, half of alarm, and half to frighten the horrible things away. The instant my noise broke the still air, the alligators sank from sight, and quickly as possible I dove back through the narrow passage.

When I reached the cotton-wood path, the light of day was gone, and here and there in the sombre vault above me, the larger stars had commenced their vigils. Still I stopped not here. I knew but little of the habits of the alligator, and if I was in their path I might fall in with them if I remained. So I pushed on, determined to get clear of their byway ere I stopped for consultation. Of course I was in the right way. It was the narrow path through the timber. On, on I pushed—farther, I thought, than before—and at length I came to the shore of another bayou!

This, then, was the other terminus of the road. Whether the alligators would travel it in the nighttime or not, I did not know. But I wished to get out of it. I gazed about me, but the shore of the bayou offered no way of travel. I turned back, and at a short distance I found a place where the under-growth was not so thick. I turned off here and wandered on, struggling through the narrow openings between the trees, and ever and anon crawling beneath tangled and matted masses of vines and interwoven boughs.

But it was growing darker and darker. I had reached a swampy opening, where tall grass grew about the trees, and where the bottom felt soft and treacherous beneath my feet. One step—one more—and I sank into the mud to my right knee. With a shudder I started back and sank down!

For the first time, I began to realize the peculiarities of my situation. Until the present moment I had been only intent upon getting out of the swamp, never once thinking of my real position. I had come—so it seemed to me—by an easy way, and why should I not return as easily? All that was necessary, was to find the path. But I had no more of that hope. It was now dark—wholly, pitchy dark—and the night had fairly settled over the swamp. I could not see two yards from me in any direction save heavenward.

As soon as I plainly saw that I could go no further alone, I started to my feet and cried out for my companions. I hallooed with all my power, and then listened for the reply. But none came. I called again, and again, but with the same result. I seized my rifle and discharged it. I had loaded it after securing the flamingo. As the reverberations died away, I listened again; but no answer came.

What? Was I so far off? If they had heard it of course they would have fired in return. I loaded and fired again. The sharp report rang out upon the night air, and the dull reverberations broke their way over the distant tree-tops; but not a sound in reply. Once more I loaded up—this time more heavily than before—and fired again. Still the same! Again I seized my powder-flask, and poured in a charge many times larger than usual; but the report was no louder than before. I had got in more powder than would burn in the chamber. Eagerly, painfully I listened until I became assured that I could not make myself heard, and then I sank down again.

I now began to reflect upon a subject which had better been reflected upon at an earlier date. I was utterly astonished at my own thoughtlessness as the truth began to break upon me. I had been acting upon the idea that I had followed the flamingo only some ten minutes. I had been led on by a frenzy of eagerness, and had not thus taken the least note of absolute time or distance. My only thought had been the regal bird, and while he had been kept in sight, no other thought had even offered itself to my mind. But now that I came to reflect, I saw my error. As near as I could calculate, from the position of the sun when I started, and its position as the flamingo fell, I knew that I must have followed the bird from half to three-quarters of an hour; and at the speed I kept most of the time, I could not have travelled less than three miles!

The bird, by an instinct, or by a knowledge of the place, had evidently lead me by devious ways around bayous, bays, and brakes; so that to find the same way back was a human impossibility!

You may safely conclude that my position was anything but pleasant. The night had settled down, dark and cheerless as Erebus; the atmosphere was cold, damp, penetrating, and miasmatic; and the horrid howl of the wild beasts, mingled with the screechings of night-birds, and the croakings of frogs, and the hissing of other reptiles, helped to fill up the measure of terrors that made my heart quake again!

I had found a sitting-place upon a small dry knoll, where grew a huge tree, which I afterwards found to be a willow. Once I was startled by a sharp hissing sound close by me, and I attempted to change my place; but at the third step I settled up to the knee in soft mud, and I shrank back and sat down again. My flamingo was by my side, and when I became so exhausted that I could not keep awake, I carefully covered my head and face with my cap and frock, and then placed the body of my bird for a pillow. I have many a time slept upon a harder bed, and rested my head upon a harder pillow; but I think I never found a bed before in quite so thankless a place. Still exhaustion overcame me, and I sank to sleep. It must have been about midnight.

When I awoke it was just daylight. I could tell by the color of the sky that the sun was just rising. I got up and gazed about me. I found that I had reached the knoll whereon I had slept by a narrow strip of dry sward, not over three feet wide, where a tree seemed to have at some time fallen, and gradually settled and become overgrown with sod. On all other hands was mud, while at no great distance, through the trees, I could see the edge of a bayou.

I could now tell by the rising sun, the true points of the compass, and though I knew not the exact course I had pursued the night before, yet I had some idea of my position. I was upon the point of climbing a tall honey-locust, which grew close at hand, to see if I could gain any view of the upland, when I thought I heard the sound of a human voice! I stopped and listened. Yes—it was the cry of a man! It was a "hallo-o-o-o-ho!"—long drawn out, and I was sure I recognized the voice of Old Ben. In a moment more, I heard the discharge of a gun. I caught up my rifle, and brought it to my shoulder; but it was not loaded. In my agony of the night, I had forgotten it. But I quickly loaded it, and then discharged it.

As soon as the reverberations had died away, I listened again. The hallo-o-o-o-ho! was repeated, and I thought it came from the direction of the water I had seen. I caught up my flamingo and started. I was determined that I would not lose my bird now, for if I got safely out of this, his value would be ten times enhanced. I reached the edge of the bayou, or lake, and as soon as I could find an opening in the tangled stuff that grew upon the shore, I poked through, and found a standing-place upon a huge log that had fallen over into the water. I gazed off, and as I did so, a quick ejaculation of joyful thanks burst from my lips.

The lake was broad and glassy, stretching away for miles, and directly before me—not over a quarter-of-a-mile distant, was a large row-boat—a sort of flat-bottomed scow—with our whole male household within!

I danced and clapped my hands—then I shouted and waved my cap. They saw me, and in a moment more the boat came leaping towards me. As the bows touched the shore, I leaped on board, and as soon as the first extravagant notes of joy and gratitude had been passed, I was called upon to tell my story.

Uncle Abner opened his eyes with wonder as I proceeded; and when I had concluded, he assured me, that my escape was almost a miracle. He knew the track I must have taken, and said, that if one hundred men should pick their way through as I had done, ninety-nine of them would surely be lost in the treacherous, swarded mud of the swamp.

"Just you hold on till I have time," said the old man, "and I'll tell ye a little scrape I had in there that'll make your hair rise."

When we reached home, Mammy caught my hand, and I verily believe she would have kissed me had not her husband been present. The men had not slept since the night before. They had been wandering through the forest nearly all night with torches, never once thinking of the swamp. But towards morning, when there was nothing left to scour but the swamp, they took the boat and put off, not even the old man himself caring to wander there a-foot. He knew he could penetrate to nearly all parts with the boat, as he often rowed out to show visitors the dismal recesses of the place, where I had passed my first night, on Lake Caddo.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Lady Subscriber.—You had better summon all your dignity to your aid, and cast out from your heart the image of the lover who has proved so faithless. It seems unaccountable to us how a woman can love a man who is unfaithful to her, and even insults her by openly exhibiting his preference of another. No real true-hearted woman or man would ever submit to such treatment from one who had been her or his acknowledged love. Instead of mourning, despairing, and thinking of poisoning yourself, you should rejoice that you found the faithless fellow out before you had married him, and thus escaped the misery of being indissolubly yoked for life with such a despicable character. Women must become more dignified, high-toned, and self-reliant, and then when a lover proves unstable they can "whistle him down the wind" with the same noble nonchalance with which they meet other untoward events. We have but little, if any respect for men and women who will follow a faithless sweetheart or lover with supplicatory groans and anguish: such behavior is unworthy of a human being.

Katie R.—As applied to character, "impulse" means a sort of thoughtless and spontaneous energy and decision of mind. An "impulsive" person is one who acts with headlong impetuosity; who permits his feelings to hurry him into action before his reason has had time to come into play and direct his energy. Impulsive people are apt to be generous; but their generosity comes from mere animal feeling, instead of strength of moral principle, or depth of spiritual insight. On the whole, an impulsive man is by no means the best sort of a man; he is as apt to go wrong as to go right; and when he happens, by chance, to shoot off in the right direction, he is apt to go to work in the wrong way to do what is to be done. Reason and conscience are better than impulse.

Cæsar.—You should have kept your promise punctually; or, if you saw that it was *impossible* for you to do so, you should have informed the other party of the fact several days in advance, and asked for further indulgence. We cannot regard with leniency any such breach of faith. A promise should be regarded as sacred, and never be broken simply because the keeping of it would occasion the promiser a little or much inconvenience. We would have little faith in that man's character who should often fail to keep his promise.

Allie.—A young lady should never confess her love for a man until he has "declared" himself, and asked her hand in marriage. A man who would behave as you mention, must be an impertinent puppy, and altogether beneath a woman's notice; yet, we are sorry to say, three men out of five would probably behave in the same way under the same circumstances—and this is a strong reason why girls should be exceedingly cautious in matters of affection.

William Chelsea.—You must come to an agreement with your grocer or he can sue you for his bill. You can set up as a defence that the bill is fraudulent and contains items which you never had of him; but it is quite possible that he would beat you on the trial, inasmuch as you probably could not *prove* anything of that kind, while his clerks would swear to the correctness of his account. You had better arrange the matter amicably.

A Young Subscriber.—Among the "Notices to Correspondents" in the Ledger of March 14th, you will find a communication from the Hon. Mr. Dobbin, late Secretary of the Navy, in which full information is given in regard to the qualifications of those who wish to get appointed to the U. S. Naval School at Annapolis, as well as the manner of making the application for an appointment.

T. M. J.—You did right to ask the gentleman for your seat again, (which you had permitted him to take for a time, at his request,) after he had conversed with the lady (your companion) so long as to weary her. On such occasions, a man should not trespass upon the good nature of his acquaintances.

Back Woodsman.—There is no reason why persons condemned to suffer capital punishment are almost always hung on Friday, unless the reason be that judges consider that a sort of black unlucky day, and therefore select it as the most appropriate one on which to have the horrible penalty inflicted.

A Maiden in Despair.—Pay no attention to all the innuendoes, sneers, smiles, and scoffs of your enemies. Ignore the whole concern, and they will soon cease to annoy you. You are probably too sensitive, and magnify mole-hills into mountains.

Inez Isadore.—It strikes us that it would not be a very good plan to give your twin boys "names as much alike as possible." However, as you want similar and uncommon names, we will suggest Rolla and Roland.

Melnotte.—Obtain an introduction to the girl, before you send her any communications; it is not proper for young men to send a girl poetry whom they have no acquaintance with, however much they may *wish* to do so.

Helen M. L.—The best medium in which to advertise for a friend who has been in Australia sixteen years, would be some paper in Sydney or Melbourne, or papers at both places.

Charles A. V.—Tell the lady that you unfortunately lost her miniature, and ask her to permit you to get another taken.

Ella Howard.—We do not teach dancing.

Mrs. G.—The place you mention was founded by the disciples of the "Free Love" school of philosophical Jeremy Diddlers and villains extraordinary. But the founders being too lazy to work, and rather unsuccessful in borrowing, the settlement fizzled out, and we believe is now deserted, and the streets overgrown with briars and brambles, typical of the "thorny way" which all immoral philosophers must sooner or later tread. Most of the leaders in this new "philosophy" are now poor paupers, who live on their friends, and pass their time mostly in soliciting loans from new acquaintances and dodging old ones whom they have already duped. Our advice is, that no respectable person should have anything to do with them.

Ida.—No. A man to whom a girl is engaged to be married has no "right" to control her actions in any way whatever; nor should he even intrude his wishes upon her except in matters of importance. Too much interference with harmless affairs on the part of a lover, is the surest way to alienate the affections of his affianced sweetheart. On the other hand, no girl who *truly loves* a man would persist in a course of conduct which she knew annoyed him, or refuse to comply with a request made by him which involved no sacrifice of principle, nor interfered with the rights of another. Mutual forbearance and concession should be the rule among lovers both before and after marriage.

All Correspondents will please remember that in order to ensure the reading of their communications they must be written in a plain and legible hand, and with ink that has color in it. Many letters are written in such a delicate and "invisible" hand, and with such pale ink, that we never think of spoiling our eyes over them, but at once consign them to the basket or the stove. Be brief, too, and sparing of explanations and compliments. Ask your questions at once, *and then stop.* All long-winded introductions, excuses, explanations, and praises of whatever kind or degree, are thrown away upon us. We have no time to waste upon them.

E. Andrews.—The Ledger is invariably sent to the news-dealers before it is mailed to subscribers; such are the arrangements of our office, and such is our choice. We do not want anybody residing in a place where there is a news-office, to subscribe for the Ledger; but if a man does subscribe for it, he must submit to the regulations of our office. We had much rather every one would buy the Ledger of the news-dealers. A hundred thousand papers can be sent to them with less trouble than one thousand can be sent by mail to subscribers.

Wild Buffalo wishes to know, in case he owes A. $20. and A. owes B. the same amount, if B. draws a draft at sight on A. for $20, and gives it to him (our correspondent), if he can compel A. to accept it in payment of his (our correspondent's) debt? No. If B. should, in a court of law, establish his claim against A., and get a judgment against him, and then assign the judgment to you, you could compel A. to accept that as payment; or, if he would not, and should sue you, the judgment would be allowed as an offset to his claim.

Miss L. H.—Men who are too rude to address a lady in a respectful and courteous manner, cannot be influenced in the right direction by any exhibition of temper or indignation on the part of those who experience their impertinence. The best way to treat such persons is to maintain towards them the most formal and freezing courtesy, and to pay no attention to them whatever when they address you by your Christian name or otherwise discourteously or too familiarly accost you.

Henry O.—It was a most outrageous thing for the man thus to strike his acquaintance at a party; and the latter deserves much praise for his forbearance in not chastising him on the spot. It was much better that he did not resent the insult by physical force, however; and he would do well to continue to act in the same dignified manner, and leave the offending savage to the indignation and disgust of the community.

A. P. C.—It would not be improper or discourteous for you to refuse to lend your Ledger to those who are too stingy or spongy to buy it. As for "the young man," don't do anything to let him know that you love him; if he is not sharp enough to find it out for himself, he is too stupid to make you a good husband. Besides, modesty and diffidency are among the chief charms of woman, and should never be sacrificed.

Blackstone, Jr.—A knowledge of Latin is not *absolutely indispensable*, now-a-days, to a student at law, but entire ignorance of that language will be a serious drawback to him. You can acquire sufficient knowledge of the Latin tongue to smoothe your path through the elements of the law, without the aid of a teacher. The books will cost but a few dollars.

F. C. S.—It is not necessary or usual for a promiscuous company to rise from their seats when new-arrived guests enter the room; it is more polite to pay no attention to new-comers when they first make their appearance, and thus give them an opportunity to look about in peace and compose themselves for the proper performance of the ceremonies and courtesies of the occasion.

S. S. G. wishes to know if a young lady can love *two* men, sincerely and truly, at the same time. We cannot say what a woman can do or can not do "at the same time;" but we know this, namely: That *we* should not care to be one of the "two at the same time" beloved of any woman that we ever saw or read of. We should consider such a creature as a nondescript monster.

A Boston Lover.—If we understand your letter, you are in love with a woman who has publicly led an abandoned life, and you wish to know whether or not you had better marry her. If such is the fact, it matters little what you do; for the fate of a man who could seriously entertain such an abominable idea, is of little consequence.

M. A. C.—It is not the young lady's duty to inform you that she receives the Ledger, or to say anything about it, unless you wrote to her that you were going to send it. Wait patiently until a fitting opportunity comes for her to mention the subject *accidentally*, and then you will probably hear something pleasant about it.

A School-Girl in Love.—Wait six years, and then see how you feel about it. These "eternal attachments" generally come to an end in about three months, under favorable circumstances. As for "crying your eyes out," you had better not do it, as you will find them very useful all through life.

N. S. H.—We think that the addressing a female friend, or acquaintance, as "Dear Sarah," or "Dear Mary," or "Dear" whatever her name may be, by a young man, would be rather familiar, unless they were *very* intimate. It is better to be exceedingly formal than ever so slightly impertinent.

Inquirer, Baltimore.—We know nothing about the "celebrated physician" of whom you inquire; but it is safe to assume that any vendor of quack medicines who advertizes himself a doctor of divinity as well as a doctor of medicine, is an impostor and a cheat. Send him no money.

Sarah and Mary.—In country places ladies can go to concerts and other public places without attendants, but such things cannot be done in the large cities without exposing women to insults and dangers.

Warren T. W.—We do not think that coffee is injurious to health, as a general thing, although there probably are constitutions which it would unfavorably affect. As to the other matters, consult your family physician.

A Preserver of the Ledger.—No; we do not purchase old numbers of the Ledger. It is as much as we can do to print and sell them, without bothering ourselves with buying them.

C. Slade.—"The Refugees" begins with the Ledger for January 3rd: "Karmel the Scout" is commenced in the Ledger of January 24th. We can supply you with the back numbers.

Hearth Shore.—The eminent legal advisers who have been consulted by the lady know more about the laws of your State, and the machinery by which they are brought to bear, than we do. All she can do is to follow their advice.

Dr. G. P. S.—We cannot tell whether the correspondent referred to was the person you supposed. We would not wish to intrude upon his secrets, or to interfere in any private matters, under any circumstances whatever.

A. J. Beale.—We can furnish the back numbers of the Ledger from the commencement of "Orion the Gold-Beater." From that date to January 31st, 1857, would cost, at four cents a copy, sixty-eight cents.

J. F. H.—The rates of exchange for bills drawn on London constantly vary. Whenever you wish to buy one, the broker will soon tell you what a draft for £201 7*s*. 6*d*. will cost in federal money.

William H. S.—If you wish to acquire a good practical knowledge of the art of drawing and sketching, you had better take at least one course of lessons from some accomplished teacher.

Mabel and Jessie.—You had better wait until your friend first pays you a visit. You can easily let him know of your whereabouts by a friendly letter, without betraying any forwardness.

A New Haven Student.—No; the United States Government is not responsible for money lost in the mails, even when the letters are registered.

G. N. W.—The numbers of the Ledger containing the "Storm Secret" will cost forty-eight cents; "Orion the Gold-Beater" fifty-six cents.

S. K.—Yes; we can change your subscription, and send the Ledger to your friend, if you will give us your address and his own.

J. P.—We send Ledgers to Memphis, Tennessee. One should be very careful how he meddles unfavorably with the character of girls.

Inquirer.—Yes; the Ledger is sold in Charleston, S. C., by the book-dealers.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*